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" If Rishi Dayanand were not born in India we would not have had Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak and Lal Lajpat Rai."

Kadija Begum.

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" Even if a single copy of the 'Light of Truth' were to cost 1,000 rupees, I would have sold all my wealth to purchase one. I have read the book eleven times, and each time I perused the book I saw new light and came across new thoughts and new ideas."

—Pandit Gurudutt Vidyarati, M.A.

First Maker of Modern India and Creator of a New Age

MAHARISHI DAYANAND SARASVATI

(Founder of Arya Samaj)

MR. R. BODASING

President: Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Natal

Foreword

It was by sheer good luck that I happened to reach Durban a little ahead of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Natal, which is taking place in the second week of February, 1950, and could contribute my humble quota to the Report of the Sabha's activities, which they are going to bring out very shortly. In an acknowledged sense, it is a foreword, though really it is an afterword as it has been written after I have read several printed pages and have a good deal of manuscript read to me by my learned friend Pt. Nardevji Vedalankar.

The report is not only a brief account of the activities of the Sabha, ever since its birth in 1925, but also concerns the two decades which preceded that auspicious date, and it is an appreciation of the work done by the early pioneers of the Arya Samajic Mission in South Africa. Bhai Parmanand, Swami Shankaranand, Mehta Jaimini, Pravin Singh, Swami Manglanand Puri and several others who sowed the seed of Vedic Dharma Prachar in these parts deserve the gratitude of the whole Arya Samajic World as well as of the. Hindus, whose attention they drew to the miserable conditions of their brothers in this foreign land and roused them to action.

The first Indian immigrants to this country were brought as indentured labourers to work on the sugar cane fields of the white settlers in 1860. The British Government, under which India was in those days, cared more for the interests of the whites and the Indians were not only brought under objectionable circumstances, but were also kept in South Africa in such a way that their social and moral status became horribly low in the course of time. They forgot their religion, they forgot their fasts and festivals, they forgot their social customs, they forgot their language and they were either converted to Christianity or were left to drag out a miserable life, their connections with their Mother Country were cut, there was none to tell them that even labourers in India have a high standard of morality. The descendants of these immigrants, not knowing what religion their ancestors belonged to, or what their traditional festivals were, began to worship Muslim Tazias and slowly succumbed to the alien influences. It was

to ameliorate these conditions that the Arya Samaj Workers came and laid the foundations of the Hindu Sabha or the Arya Samaj. But the real work was done by those who had permanently settled in this country, Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi being at the head of them. This revered Sannyasi is well known in India for his philanthropic and social or religious work in South Africa.

Though I am new to this country and have learnt very little in this fortnight, I find that Shri Satyadev is the backbone of the Pratinidhi Sabha. It is through his exceptionally strenuous efforts that the Sabha and other Arya Samajic Institutions could make so much progress. His is an unflinching faith in the Arya Samaj. This devoted disciple of Swami Dayanand spares no pains to see that the Samaj progresses well. What his position cannot achieve is achieved by his disposition and his zeal. In this fortnight I could make acquaintances with only a few of Arya Samaj workers and sympathisers, but I can say that in South Africa there is no dearth of them and the future of the Arya Samaj is in good hands. I may name only a few of them:—Shri B. Purmasir, Dr. N. P. Dessai, B. M. Patel, Shri Govindhji, Shri Govan, Shri S. L. Singh, Shri R. Karpath, Shri M. Moonoo, Shri Nayanarajh, Shri Sookraj Chotai. This is a very incomplete list and many important names have been left out, for which I owe these workers an apology. I have come in contact with many young men, specially of Yuvuk Sabha, from whom much can be expected.

Besides the aforementioned preachers other Vedic Preachers have also come afterwards to revive the Arya Dharma, namely Professor Ralaram, M.A., Vedic Missionary, Mehta Jaimini, Yogi Professor Yashpal, Girl Guides of Baroda, Arya Kanya Maha Vidyalaya with Pandit Anandpriya, Pandit Rishiram, Pandit Nardev Vedalankar and others.

It is true that for want of proper and adequate guidance from Bharatvarsha, the work could not be done as satisfactorily as it should have been done. But there are hopeful signs that the Natal Arya Pratinidhi Sabha is trying to stand upon its own legs and to prepare local workers. It is just what the Sabha should do. It is by no means difficult. The potentiality is there, only methodical work is required. It does not mean that the central organisation of the Arya Samaj, I mean Sarvadeshik Sabha, Delhi, is absolved of its responsibilities. It is the foremost duty of the Sabha to arrange for various Dharma Prachars in all the parts of the globe and justify its name; I assure our friends in South Africa that the Sabha is not unmindful of its duties. But the difficulties in its way are very many; its resources are very meagre and the complexities of the work are so insurmountable.

The immediate needs of the Natal Arya Pratinidhi Ṣabha are the following:—

1. The extension of its building.
2. A good creative and distributing centre of Arya Samajic literature best suited to the local needs.
3. A standing Committee which might devise means to contact the Zulus and other natives.
4. To push the work of Hindi.
5. To ensure better co-ordination between different sections of the Hindu Society.
6. To protect low class Hindi sections from alien influences by educating them, and by establishing social relations with them, and by helping them in time of need or difficulty.
7. To raise the level of Hindu character by spreading general education.

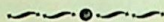
Of late there has been some awakening among Hindus of all shades and all sections and it is hoped that the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Natal, will receive due recognition and needful encouragement from all. Numerous social, moral and religious disabilities which are pressing down the Hindu community can be eradicated only by reviving Vedic Dharma and following the programme chalked out by Swami Dayanand.

May God shower His choicest blessing on the Natal Arya Pratinidhi Sabha.

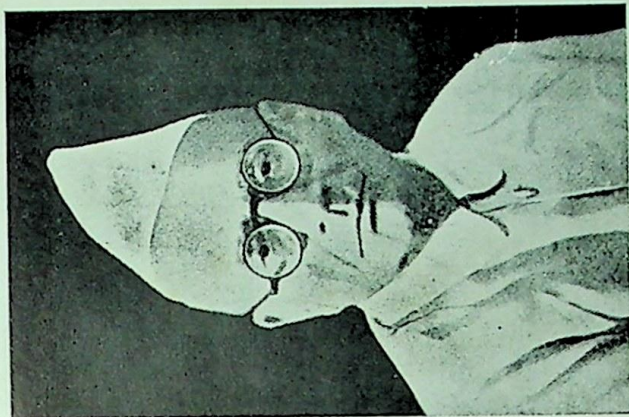
PANDIT GAṄGA PRASAD UPADHYAYA, M.A.,
General Secretary, International Aryan League, India.

Preface

BY

THE HON. SECRETARY, ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA (NATAL)

On 15th February, 1950, it would be 25 years since the inception of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal). At a general committee meeting of the Sabha held on 29th of August, 1949, it was decided to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Sabha. To commemorate the occasion it was proposed to do the following:—

1. To write and publish the history of the Arya Samaj movement in South Africa.
2. To have the foundation stone of the proposed Vedic Temple laid by the great philanthropist, Mr. R. Bodasing, the President of the Sabha, who has promised a donation of £10,000 towards the erection of the Temple.
3. To invite Pt. Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya, M.A., the General Secretary of the International Aryan League, to grace the function with his presence.
4. To re-vitalise the Arya Samajic institutions in South Africa and disseminate the Vedic teachings.
5. To establish an "Arya Vir Dhal" (Aryan Brigade) to serve the community.
6. To organise a grand procession, to arrange lecture meetings and conferences and to perform a "Maha Yag" ceremony.

It gives the Sabha great pleasure to undertake the first task, i.e., to publish the history of the Arya Samaj movement in South Africa. To mark the Silver Jubilee of the arrival of Professor Bhai Parmanandji in this country, an attempt was made in 1930 to bring out a similar publication. Acting on the instruction of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal), I wrote the history and sent the manuscript to Agra, India, for printing and when it was completed all the copies of the book were sent to Bombay, where they were burnt through a mistaken idea that they were foreign goods at a time when the campaign to boycott foreign goods in

Author of the Book

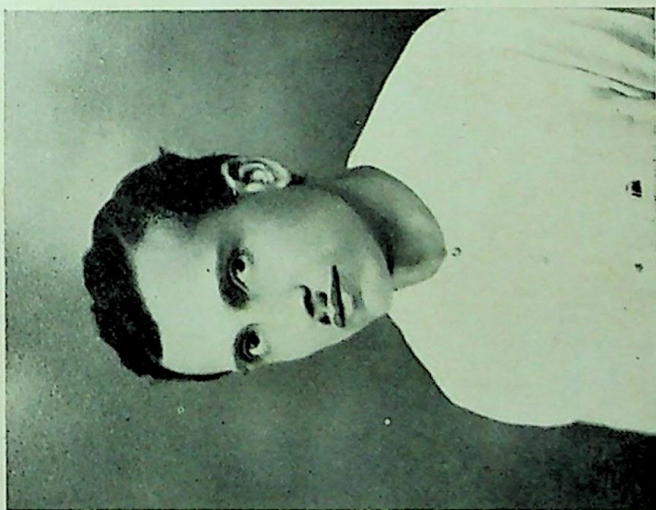
PANDIT NARDEV VEDALANKAR

President: Hindi Shiksha Sangh. Natal

Writer of Foreword

PANDIT

GANGAPRASAD UPADHYAYA, M.A.

Secretary: International Aryan League, India

Backbone of Arya Samaj

MR. D. G. SATYA DEVA

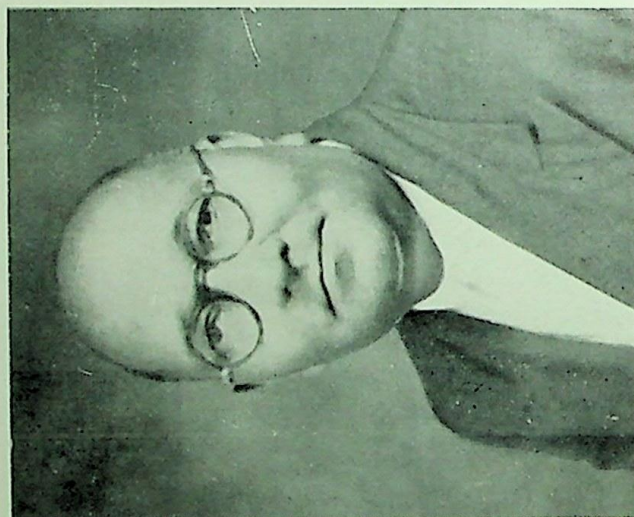
Secretary,

Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Natal

Translator of Book in English

MR. R. S. CHOTAI, B.A.

Asst. Secretary,

Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Natal

India was in force. All efforts and expenses went in vain. Therefore, on the occasion of this Silver Jubilee the history is being published in a re-written form.

This publication does not contain only a record of the history of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal)—its inception, its conferences and various activities—but also a survey of the religious, cultural, educational and social conditions of the Indians from the time of their arrival to the present day. This book will throw light on how the Indians came to this country, how they lived during the early days, how they degenerated through lack of knowledge and education, and how they transformed themselves later through the preachings of Prof. Bhai Parmanandji, Swami Shankerandji, Swami Bhawani Dayal and other preachers.

You will also find in this book accounts of the work done under the auspices of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha since its establishment by Dr. Bhagatram Sahagal, Yogi Professor Yashpal, and the Girl Guides of Arya Kanya Maha, Vidyalaya, Baroda, India. The missionary works of Professor Ralaram, Pt. Rishiram, Pt. Mehta Jaimini, Pt. Nardev Vedalankar and others also find place in this book.

Separate chapters have been devoted to the present religious and social conditions of the Hindus, their festivals, their Sanskars, their education, their mother tongue, conversion of faith, and other subjects. Indication is also given of the great contribution the Arya Samaj has made towards the uplift of the Hindu people.

All the problems affecting the Hindus have been tackled by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and affiliated units. The activities of various affiliated institutions are reported briefly in a separate chapter. In this book there is embodied also short biographical sketches of persons who have rendered meritorious services to the cause of the Arya Samaj, so that the progeny that is to come will follow the footsteps of their ancestors.

At the end of the book there appears an epilogue in which the views of the learned author of this book are expressed. He has lived in this country for about two years and is fully conversant with the conditions obtaining here. I would like to draw the attention of the reader to the constructive suggestions made by the Panditji in regard to the preservation and propagation of the Aryan culture, Indian civilisation and the Hindu way of life. It is desired that immediate steps will be taken to give effect to these practical suggestions so that we may not be able to lose our identity.

In placing this book in the hands of the public I would also like to submit for consideration my own point of view,

based on my experience on a number of important matters. They are as follows:—

(1) Under the control of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha one or two paid preachers, men as well as women, should be brought out on a permanent basis so that regular work can be done.

(2) Societies affiliated to the Sabha should be given support and co-operation and their work be regularly supervised so that they may not become lethargic. The people take little interest in their local institutions. School buildings are not entirely free from debts. Approaches be made to get the support and goodwill of the people.

(3) The field of work should be enlarged by forming under the control of affiliated bodies, Stri Samajes, night schools, Bhajan Mandals and Vir Dhals.

(4) Emphasis should be laid on the performance of the 16 Sanskars (Ceremonies) and observance of festivals.

(5) The importance of reciting the Sandhya twice daily in the morning and evening by the family and the holding of weekly services should be stressed so that children may grow up to be religious and well disciplined.

(6) Among all the Aryans (Hindus) there should be a uniform way of reciting the Sandhya and Upasana (Prayers). The meaning of the Sanskrit Mantras should be made available in the different languages so that through the Sandhya the Aryans of the various parts of the world could be unified.

(7) Everyone's attention should be drawn to Indian etiquette, customs and traditions. Our mode of living should be in keeping with the Indian outlook on life. It has been often noticed that people do not hesitate to say "good morning" or "salaam" and to shake hands, but are very reluctant to join both hands and say "Namaste." Our traditional practices must be respected and observed.

(8) Greater attention should be given to the furtherance of the study of the vernaculars so that our religion, culture, and nationality might remain secure. The bad effects of only English education are already evident. Knowledge of the mother language is essential for an escape from conversion and apish following of Western civilisation.

(9) There is a dire need of religious books and other literature to disseminate our teachings. The Pratinidhi Sabha has made efforts to own a press and have its own journal, but due to financial drawbacks hardly any progress has been made in this direction.

If attention is given to the aforementioned matters and steps taken to implement them then certainly advance can be made and success achieved in the realisation of our objects.

Pandit Nardev Vedalankar was kindly requested to undertake the task of writing this history. This he readily and willingly agreed to do. Panditji is a Snatak (graduate) of Gurukul Kangri, India, and ever since his arrival in this country nearly two years ago he has interested himself in the activities of the Sabha and supported any move pertaining to the spread of the Vedic religion. Through his humility and enthusiasm he has already become very popular. On the advice of Panditji a Hindi conference was organised at which an institution named Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal) was established to promote the study of Hindi. As President of the Sangh, the Panditji has given new life to this vital question of Hindi education. The Sabha is grateful to the Surat Hindu Educational Society for having brought Panditji out to this country.

Panditji has devoted much of his time and energy in writing this book. He has had to make a perusal of the documents and files of the Sabha in order to undertake this task. He has obtained much of the material from the proof copy of the History of the Arya Samaj published by the Sabha; "Pravasi Bharthya" and "Swami Shankeranand Sandarshan" and "Pravasi ki Atma Katha" written by Swami Bhawani Dayal.

The Sabha is, indeed, grateful to Panditji for the service he has rendered in writing this book.

The English translation of this book has been done by Mr. Sookraj Chotai, the Assistant Secretary of the Sabha. He is a graduate of the University of South Africa and has all along given his unflinching support to the Sabha. He has assisted me immensely in all undertakings. With great ability he has translated into English the addresses, resolutions and the records of the entire proceedings of the last two Vedic conferences and other important gatherings organised by the Sabha. His services and efforts are praiseworthy.

Pandit Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya, M.A., the General Secretary of the International Aryan League, India, has in response to the Sabha's invitation already arrived in this country to participate in the Silver Jubilee Celebrations. The Sabha is grateful to the Panditji for this. We firmly believe that his presence will enhance the significance of the Silver Jubilee celebration and add to its success. Much progress can also be made by him in spreading the tenets of the Vedic Dharma. The Sabha is very much thankful to the Panditji for having acceded to the Sabha's request and

writing the foreword to this book, thereby increasing its importance.

For the last 25 years the Sabha has continued to do its duty. With the help of the officials, members and the Aryan community I have been able to serve in the capacity of General Secretary for the last 24 years. From the time of the inception to the present day, Mr. S. L. Singh has given every support to the Sabha. All correspondence with the Union Government, Provincial Administration and the Municipality on behalf of the Sabha has been done by him. He has rendered invaluable services and he is, no doubt, a jewel amongst the Aryan community. Likewise, the coffers of the Sabha have been looked after for the last 20 years by Mr. M. Moonoo, the Treasurer of the Sabha. In spite of his ill-health, he has discharged his duties creditably. The Sabha owes a debt of gratitude to these two gentlemen.

All the activities of the Sabha have been done so far by sincere and loyal workers, without any pecuniary remuneration. At times they have had to spend money out of their own pockets. On this happy occasion of the Silver Jubilee I would like to thank, on behalf of the Sabha, all the present and past officials, delegates, helpers, donors and the Aryan community, for their interest, co-operation and support. I fully trust that they will continue to serve co-operatively.

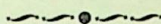
Whilst serving the Aryan community I have had one great ambition, and that is the erection of the Vedic Temple and Hall. With the grace of God this desire of mine is coming near to realisation. The plan of the proposed Temple and Hall is before you. With the magnanimous donation of £10,000 towards its erection by our generous-hearted President, Mr. R. Bodasing, the completion of the project in the very near future becomes a possibility. In our culture charity occupies an important place. Our community is being benefitted by the blessing that God has showered on the Bodasing family. The interest of the community can be furthered by the liberality of men, such as Mr. R. Bodasing. In commemoration of the Silver Jubilee of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, the foundation stone of the Vedic Temple is being laid by the President of the Sabha. It is my fervent prayer that this will be the solid foundation to the mission of the Arya Samaj and Vedic religion in this country.

In conclusion, I thank all those that have assisted the Sabha.

D. G. SATYA DEVA,
Hon. Secretary.

CHAPTER I

The First Messenger of Arya Samaj—

PROF. BHAI PARMANAND, M.A.

Commencement of Indentured Labour System. When the nations of Europe began to awaken the accumulation of wealth and the founding of empires became their primary motives. Consequently they sailed far and wide in the quest of new lands. Their explorations resulted in the discovery of countries hitherto unknown. In order to colonise these lands the assistance of slave trade was sought. Thousands of natives from Africa and elsewhere began to be sold as slaves. After a time the conscience of mankind revolted against this system and as a result of great agitation slavery was abolished. England declared traffic in slaves illegal in 1833.

The European settlements overseas were greatly affected by the emancipation of slaves. Their flourishing gardens began to wither away; other works had to be halted. To make a comfortable living became one of extreme difficulty. As a solution to the problem indentured labour system was introduced.

After negotiations agreements were concluded to accept labourers from India and China to work on these lands. Ignorant people from these countries were induced, sometimes by means ignoble, to go out to these far-flung colonies on a labour contract of five years.

The year 1834 was for the Indians an ill-fated one, for it was then that 7,000 people were sent out for the first time to Mauritius as semi-slave labourers from the port of Calcutta.

The Arrival of Indians in South Africa. Labourers from India were next sent out to Fiji, Jamaica, British Guiana, Trinidad and other colonies. By this time Europeans had already made a settlement in Natal. They required labourers to work on their sugar plantations, so they pleaded to the Government of India to send some labourers on the indentured system. The first batch of people from India arrived in this country on 17th November, 1860, from the province

of Madras, by a ship named "Cairo", for a period of five years. After a while there folowed to this land labourers from United Province, Bihar, Punjab and other provinces of India. A few years later both Muslims and Hindus from Gujerat sailed for Natal as free passenger Indians solely for the purpose of trading. Arising out of strong protests and agitation against the humiliating system of indentured labourers, in 1917 India Government decided not to send out any persons as labourers any longer.

The Condition of Hindus During the Early Stage. Generally speaking, most of the people who emigrated from India as labourers to the different European colonies were illiterate folks from the villages. Such people also came to South Africa. They left India at a time when from a religious and political point of view it was in deep slumber. The freedom movement which expressed itself in the form of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 was crushed ruthlessly. The great sage and seer, Rishi Dayanand, who awakened India from its long sleep, had not yet established the Arya Samaj movement. Therefore, to understand the mentality of people who left India at such a time is not a very difficult one. There was hardly any sign of social, religious or cultural enlightenment. They were steeped in orthodoxy, ignorance, bigotry, superstition, blind faith and witchcraft. The feeling of high and low emanating from the pernicious caste system had a good grip on them. The system under which they had come to this country and the degrading treatment that they received at the hands of their masters had a demoralizing effect on them, so much so, that their basic social and religious principles were destroyed. According to orthodox traditions one was considered a sinner if one travelled over-seas, therefore most of them regarded themselves religiously polluted. Their faith in the caste system was rudely shaken when they realised that the practices to which they were accustomed, particularly in regard to their food and seclusiveness of caste, could not be observed on board. They cut their janau (sacred thread) and choti (a tuft of hair on the head) and threw them into the sea.

In spite of the corruptive influences there was hidden within the hearts of many the germ of religious and national pride. The age-long civilisation and culture of their ancestors had left behind their stamp on them. At the first opportunity they revealed their real self. On the expiry of their 5-year period most of them settled down in this country and took up farming and other pursuits. With the meagre sum of 16 to 20 shillings a month which they received they contributed their mite for their spiritual and religious upliftment. In such circumstances mere faith in their religion enabled them to remain Hindus.

The religious beliefs of the Hindus of that time constituted superstitions, rituals and other orthodox practices. The Tamilians who had hailed from Madras worshipped Goberdhan, Mata Mai and Mari Mai. They brought with them from India the practice of animal sacrifice. Every year hundreds of animals and fowls were sacrificed in the name of God. The Hindi-speaking people also made animal sacrifices to the goddess Kali. The hoisting of jhunda (flag), the reading of Hanuman Chalisa and the performance of Satyanarain Swami Katha ceremony came to be considered as the chief religious duties.

As a first step to religious advancement the Hindus built a temple and dharmashala named Shri Thakurdwara Dharmashala, in Durban. Later temples began to be erected in places such as Verulam, Tongaat, Sea Cow Lake, Clairwood, Isipingo, Sydenham, Maritzburg and Ladysmith. The Tamilians also built their temples in Durban, Mount Edgecombe, Newlands, Isipingo, Cato Manor, Clare Estate and at other places.

The Arrival of Professor Bhai Parmanand. When the Hindus of this country were carrying on with their religious and social practices according to their orthodox way of thinking Rishi Dayanand and the Arya Samaj movement which he had founded had made a start to reform Hinduism by preaching the tenets of the ancient Vedic religion. Some staunch followers of the Arya Samaj had reached East and South Africa. They were alarmed at the spiritual and religious degeneration of their Hindu brethren in this country. Through the efforts of a few enthusiasts, among whom the name of Lala Mokamchand Varman is worthy of mention, an appeal was made to Mahatma Hansraj, the Principal of Lahore College, to send a preacher to this country. In response to this appeal Mahatma Hansraj sent out Professor Bhai Parmanand. August 5th, 1905, was indeed an auspicious day when the first ambassador of Hindu culture—Professor Bhai Parmanand—set his foot on this soil. It was the first time since the advent of Indians in this country 45 years ago that a learned man from India had visited this country.

Under the chairmanship of Mr. Ramchandra a reception committee was formed. Mr. B. A. Maghrajh and Mr. S. D. Moodley were elected Joint Secretaries and Mr. C. Doraiswami Pillay the Treasurer. This committee was also responsible for organising all the lectures. Bhaiji was an erudite orator both in English and Hindi. On account of different religious and linguistic differences obtaining at that time the formation of an Arya Samaj was not feasible. The pressing need of the moment was to create some sort of religious awakening so that people may take pride in their religion and nationality. With this end in view Bhaija

established at the outset a society entitled "Hindu Sudhar Sabha" (Hindu Reform Society).

Hindu Young Men's Association. For the benefit of the youths Bhaiji proceeded to establish Hindu Young Men's Associations at several places. After delivering a number of lectures in Durban Bhaiji left for Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal, where a rousing reception was accorded him. There was great excitement and hundreds flocked to listen to the orations of Bhaiji. In October, 1905, Bhaiji established the Hindu Young Men's Association. The Tamil-speaking people, who were very much attracted by the presence of Bhaiji, evinced unbounded enthusiasm in the newly-founded institution. They became members in large numbers and furthered the interests of the Association fervently. It is to be recorded that whilst other societies established by Bhaiji are non-existent today the Hindu Young Men's Association of Pietermaritzburg is a living and powerful body today. During its 45 years' span of existence it has made great strides in keeping the banner of Hinduism flying aloft. Its continued existence perpetuates the memory of its founder, Bhai Parmanandji. An illuminated address eulogising his work was presented to Bhaiji on his farewell from Pietermaritzburg.

From there Bhaiji proceeded on his tour of South Africa. At first he went to Ladysmith and Dundee where he was pained to see the trying conditions under which the Indians were living. He next travelled to Johannesburg, the largest city in South Africa, where he was received in a fitting manner. The Chairman of the Reception Committee was Mahatma Gandhi. Afterwards Bhaiji toured Pretoria and Cape Town. At all these places he delivered eloquent addresses in both Hindi and English. After this short but successful sojourn Bhaiji sailed for England in December, 1905.

The Effect of Bhai Parmanand's Missionary Work. Bhai Parmanandji stayed in this country for only 4 or 5 months and, therefore, was not able to stabilise his work, but still he had kindled the light of Vedic Dharma in this part of the world. Even the Europeans of this country were filled with admiration and astonishment to hear eloquent exposition of Vedic religion, culture and philosophy being made by a 29-year-old young man, Bhai Parmanandji. At that time even amongst the Europeans there were very few men of the calibre of Bhaiji in the art of oration and learning. Hindu society was able to see new light as a result of Bhaiji's visit to this country. Even to-day the name of Prof. Bhai Parmanandji—the first messenger of Aryan culture—is remembered by the Hindu Community with great reverence and respect. He was, indeed, the saviour of Hindus in this country.

First Messenger of Arya Samaj

PROFESSOR BHAI PARMANAND, M.A.

Ambassador of Vedic Culture

HIS HOLINESS

SWAMI SHANKERANANDJI

CHAPTER II

The Ambassador of Renaissance—
His Holiness Swami Shankeranandji

Arrival. Bhai Parmanandji had sailed away from this country but he had left behind in his followers a thirst for religious knowledge. After his departure efforts began to be made to invite another preacher from India. In this direction they were fortunately successful. Swami Shankeranandji expressed his willingness to come out to this country. He was at that time in England on a lecture tour.

On the day of 4th October, 1908, there was a huge crowd awaiting at the harbour of Durban. Their eyes were fixed on the ship with devotion and excitement. For the first time in South Africa the religious Guru (preceptor) of the Hindus was about to land. Exactly at 1 p.m. an inspiring figure, attired in saffron clothes, set foot on the soil of South Africa. Shouts of jai jaikar reverberated in the air at the sight of the tall Sannyasi. His personality was dignifed and his forehead pronounced. He was carrying a long stick. From that very moment there began to radiate a wave of spiritual energy and religious awakening. This Sannyasi—the first ambassador of renaissance—was His Holiness Shri Swami Shankeranandji Maharaj.

Commencement of Work. Swamiji's activity in this country commenced with his welcome reception held at the Natal Indian Congress Hall on 8th October. After this a number of speeches were delivered by the Swamiji at different welcome receptions arranged in his honour. People showed much eagerness to listen to the inspiring addresses of Swamiji. In Durban and its outskirts arrangements were made for Swamiji's lectures. At these public meetings eloquent discourses of far-reaching significance were given on culture, religion, Indian civilisation, faith in God, importance of ceremonies, mother-tongue and other matters.

The speeches of Swamiji had their desired effect. Because of the corruptions which had crept into Hinduism in the form of superstitions and meaningless rituals, many a Hindu youth had come to regard Hinduism as a religion of

no importance. They were beginning to embrace Christianity or Islam. Their mistaken notion of Hinduism was corrected by the speeches of Swamiji. They were once again drawn towards their religion and made conscious of their nationality.

The conditions of Hindus existing then greatly alarmed the Swamiji. He, therefore, resolved firmly to awaken their religious consciousness. He diagnosed the ills of Hindu society like an efficient doctor and prescribed the remedy which was of a threefold nature, namely, the imparting of lectures and sermons, the observance of festivals and performance of sanskars, and the study of the vernaculars. There is no doubt that this doctor of Hindu society was successful in his diagnostic analysis and remedial treatment.

Festivals and Ceremonies. During the 50 years that the Hindus had lived in this country they had to a very large extent forgotten their festivals and sacraments. Whatever vestige was left of their festivals was humiliating and degrading. Moharrum had become the principal festival of the Hindus. Great interest was shown in the making of pagodas and the singing of mercias (Muslim religious songs). The attention of the Swamiji was drawn to this degrading attitude of the Hindus. Swamiji strongly advocated the celebration of Deepavali in place of Moharrum. Accordingly the Deepavali Festival was grandly celebrated in October, 1908, and ever since then Deepavali has come to be recognised and observed as the most important of all the festivals of the Hindus. One of the results of this change was that whereas in the past the employees of the Railway Department and the Municipality got leave on Moharrum they were now given holiday on Deepavali Day. In addition to Deepavali the births of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna began to be celebrated. Whilst working in this direction the Swamiji stressed the need of performing Sanskars (sacraments). The importance of these Sanskars was brought home to the masses. The Swamiji gave the lead by performing the Sanskars himself and in this way the Sanskars were popularised.

The Chariot of Rama. Having studied the mind of the Hindus the Swamiji organised a procession of the chariot of Rama as a substitute to pagoda worship. For this purpose in Durban in 1910 a Chariot Committee was established. Under its auspices elaborate preparations began to be made to take the chariot out with all its grandeur and sanctity on the occasion of the Birth of Lord Rama. Hindu society pulsated with great devotion, thrill and excitement. For the first time in its history hundreds of Hindus congregated and took part in this religious procession. The chariot procession was scheduled to pass through Grey

Street, where a large mosque is situated. The Muslims began to agitate and made attempts to prevent the chariot from passing along the mosque. On 18th April, in a spectacular though dignified manner, the procession of the chariot commenced with the tolling of bells and the rendering of music. The entire control of the procession was in the hands of the fearless Sannyasi who walked in front of the chariot. When the procession entered Grey Street no-one had the courage to intercept it. The police, fearing trouble, were anxious to stop the procession, but the magnetic personality of the Swamiji was such that they could not deprive the people of their elementary right of citizenship to conduct peacefully their religious procession. The chariot passed along the mosque without any incident and ever since then the question of playing music in front of a mosque was settled for all time.

The Success of His Mission. The message of Swamiji reached every nook and corner of Natal. His lectures began to be delivered from place to place. The Swamiji was an eloquent orator. He had a powerful voice and an excellent command of the English language. His lectures used to leave behind an indelible impress on the minds of his audience. He addressed meetings organised by Durban Hindu Sudhar Sabha and Umgeni Hindu Progressive Society and delivered instructive and educative lectures at Stanger, Umgeni and other places. A "havan" ceremony was performed by the Swamiji at Belford. Lectures were given in other centres of Natal, e.g. Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith and Newcastle. As the Swamiji was an outstanding speaker in English Europeans in appreciable numbers used to attend his lectures. They used to consider themselves fortunate in listening to such soul-elevating and inspiring religious and philosophic discourses. His address on "Human Soul" to the Theosophical Society was so impressive that the presiding Chairman, Mr. Herbert Price, declared that it was the most outstanding speech on philosophy and metaphysics that he had ever heard in his life.

Veda Dharma Sabha. With a view to consolidating his work in the field of religion the Swamiji established societies wherever he went to continue the work he had initiated. "Veda Dharma Sabha" was the name of the society he founded. Its aims and objects, principles and rules were identical to those of the Arya Samaj. The inception of the first Veda Dharma Sabha took place in Beatrice Street, Durban. Another followed in Clare Estate. The Swamiji also established with the same set purpose a Hindu Young Men's Association in Sydenham and a Young Men's Vedic Society in Durban. In this organisation the Tamil-speaking community greatly interested themselves. This society concerned itself principally with the observance of

festivals, furtherance of the mother tongue and religious discourses.

Even in Pietermaritzburg Swamiji continued with his mission with great vigour. Many speeches of a very high standard were delivered. On 10th April, 1909, under the leadership of Swamiji, the Veda Dharma Sabha was founded. Most of the societies inaugurated by Swamiji are to-day defunct, but the Veda Dharma Sabha of Pietermaritzburg has made great progress and is today reckoned to be one of the most important and active Hindu organisations. (For a full report of the activities of this Sabha see Chapter 12.)

Departure to India and His Return Visit to South Africa. When Swamiji was actively engaged in infusing new spirit by his impressive and thought-provoking lectures he received a message from India that his Guru—Swami Atmanandji—was critically ill. In order to see his Guru he decided to sail for India. A number of farewell meetings were held in his honour. Numerous societies presented the Swamiji with illuminated addresses and wished him bon voyage. The Secretary of the Government of Natal wrote and expressed his regret at his inability to bid farewell to the Swamiji. During the early part of 1911 he sailed to India. On the recovery of his Guru he returned to South Africa before the year was out to continue with his work. Once again he received a rousing welcome.

The Inception of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha. On his return from India Swamiji directed his attention to consolidating the entire Hindu community. For this purpose on 31st May, 1912, a Conference of South African Hindus was summoned. For the first time a conference of such magnitude and importance was being held in this country. Three hundred delegates from various parts of South Africa participated in this conference which was presided over by the Swamiji. Hundreds of spectators also attended. Mr. R. B. Chetty was the Chairman and Mr. S. R. Pather the Secretary. An historic address exhorting the Hindus to awake from their slumber was delivered by the Swamiji. A number of resolutions were thereafter adopted. The most important one was in connection with the formation of the Hindu Maha Sabha. This took place 3 years before the Hindu Maha Sabha of India was founded. Mr. C. V. Pillay was elected the President, Mr. S. R. Pather the Secretary, and Mr. T. V. Pather the Treasurer. Another similar conference was held the subsequent year. The lofty aims with which the Swamiji had founded this Maha Sabha remained unrealised. After Swamiji's departure to India the Maha Sabha lost its vitality and to a large measure became inactive.

Dissemination of Vedic Teaching in Transvaal and Cape Province. Having accomplished creditable work in Natal the Swamiji proceeded to Transvaal. In Johannesburg—the largest city in South Africa—he got a rousing reception which was unprecedented. The Mayor of the city, Mr. G. D. Ellis, was himself the Chairman of the Reception Committee. A series of 15 to 20 lectures were delivered in the Masonic hall, in English. The lectures were so impressive that the number of European members of the audience went on increasing daily. His masterly exposition of Vedic doctrines created a good impression on the Europeans. Many Christian priests became envious of Swamiji. The European press of the city paid glowing tributes to him. He travelled far and wide in Transvaal and delivered lectures in Pretoria, Germiston, Boksburg, Benoni, Roodeport, Klerksdorp and other places. Before he left Transvaal a banquet was arranged in his honour by both European and Indian residents of the city. European ladies participated in the banquet unreservedly.

Departure to India. From Transvaal Swamiji went to Cape Province and lectured to large crowds in Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Cape Town. He created a deep impression in these towns. Swamiji returned to Durban from Cape Town and suddenly left for India on 17th May, 1913, before the Hindu community which was so much indebted to him could bid him farewell.

Mahatma Gandhiji and Swami Shankeranandji. Years prior to Swamiji's arrival Mahatma Gandhi (then Barrister Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi) had come to this country in 1893. This period in his life was of an experimental nature. He was just beginning to gain prominence. In the social and religious sphere he was not able to advance the cause of the Hindus. In regard to religion he was not yet settled in mind. Through the efforts of Swamiji he made acquaintance with the work of Rishi Dayanand and his Arya Samaj movement.

By this time Gandhiji's famous campaign of Passive Resistance, on which he launched in 1913, had not yet commenced. It can be said that the widespread activities of the Swamiji in the social and religious field which had revitalised the masses helped in the struggle of Ghandiji, if not in a direct way, at least indirectly. Amongst those who were in the forefront of the struggle were Swami Bhawani Dayalji and his wife, Jagrani Devi, who had already received the message of Rishi Dayanand and accepted the principles of the Arya Samaj. Where the credit for awakening the national and political consciousness of the Indians goes to Ghandiji, there Swami Shankeranandji is honoured and remembered for creating cultural and religious pride.

The greatest difference of opinion that existed between Gandhiji and Swamiji was on the Hindu-Moslem question. Mahatmaji's generosity in this respect is world-famous. With a burning desire not to offend the Moslems, he used to rise above the confines of ordinary religion to heights of universal spirituality. The effects of such a tolerant and liberal policy were at times disastrous to him. The Swamiji bore no ill-will against the Muslim; he was simply concerned with the regeneration of his people. There was neither national pride nor unity amongst the Hindus. If Swamiji had not handled the situation fearlessly it is doubtful whether the Hindus would have remained what they are today. Naturally the Muslims began to take a strong dislike to Swamiji, as was evident everywhere. Swamiji continued to do his work without taking notice of the antagonistic feeling of the Muslims towards him. The blame for creating Hindu-Moslem hostility cannot be levelled at the Swamiji.

The Results of Swamiji's Work. Swamiji's sermons and lectures enabled Hindu society to throb once again, after 50 years' inertia, with new vitality. On the work of Swami Shankeranandji, Swami Bhawani Dayal writes: "Although I had not seen Swami Shankeranandji in South Africa, on reaching Natal I noticed the effects of his religious propaganda. To have created in the Hindus who at one time were groping in darkness faith in Vedic Dharma, devotion to Aryan culture, interest in Sandhya and Haven, pride in their festivals, practice in greeting one another with namaste, a feeling for the mother tongue, knowledge of conducting meetings, hatred for evil practices, respect for the mother country and confidence in the bright future of the Aryans could not have been the work of any ordinary individual."

Swamiji's erudition and oratory powers created good impression on the Europeans who up till then had known of Indians as mere coolies (labourers). Their notion of Indians' potentialities was completely changed by Swamiji's learned discourses. Many Europeans became his disciples. Sir Mathew Nathan, the Governor of Natal at that time, was much influenced by the outstanding ability of Swamiji, whom he generally consulted on matters affecting the Indians. Another result of Swamiji's work was the prevention of a number of youths from becoming converts to Islam and Christianity. Faith in their religion was created. Because of Swamiji's ability in successfully establishing the superiority of the Vedic religion the padres began to hate him. Being impressed with the speeches of Swamiji, the famous educationist, William Hosken, admitted that it was proved that the East was the repository of religion, philosophy and spirituality. They were honoured by the presence of the Swamiji who hailed from the East. Similar

tribute was paid to him in Johannesburg at a banquet by Weburg, who said: "Swamiji, I can assure you that during the last 20 years such a grand reception as this was not accorded to any lecturer or philosopher." The Sunday Post wrote: "Five times greater than any Western philosopher is Swamiji." The success of Swamiji mainly depended on his outstanding personality. His presence alone had a magnetic effect. He was a man of great learning. His eloquent speeches generated power. His pleasant conversations and gentle demeanour were a source of great attraction. His voice was melodious, and his teachings have left behind an indelible impress. Fearlessness was one of the essential qualities of the Swamiji. The Hindus were, indeed, fortunate in having had the services of such a daring and dynamic Sannyasi in its formative stage.

For the purpose of unifying and consolidating the forces of the Hindus the Swamiji created a machinery in the Hindu Maha Sabha. In memory of Swamiji the Hindu Maha Sabha has decided to erect the "Swami Shankeranandji Memorial Hall".

Swamiji was truly the apostle of religious awakening of the Indians in this country.

CHAPTER III

SWAMI BHAWANI DAYAL

and other Preachers of the Earlier Period

Swami Bhawani Dayal. After Swami Shankeranadji's departure to India the Indian community of South Africa found another person of outstanding ability to keep the torch of Aryan culture alight. This person was Pandit Bhawani Dayal who afterwards became famous as Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi. The work of Pandit Bhawani Dayal embraced many fields. What is striking is that he was the first South African-born Indian who, through sheer dint of perseverance, had risen so high. His biography is one of a self-made man.

Childhood. Ever since childhood Panditji had become a victim of difficulties. When he, as a youngster, accompanied his father to India he got the first opportunity of setting his foot on the land of the Rishis. Acting under pressure of his kith and kin in India his father rejected him at a time when he was only 12 years old. In spite of undergoing great impediments he began to go forward in life. The difficulties that he had to face helped to illumine his character. Gradually this lad turned into a youth with indomitable courage and all the makings of leadership. His success in life was due to three guiding principles, viz.: (1) The Message of Arya Samaj, (2) Hindi education, and (3) Patriotism.

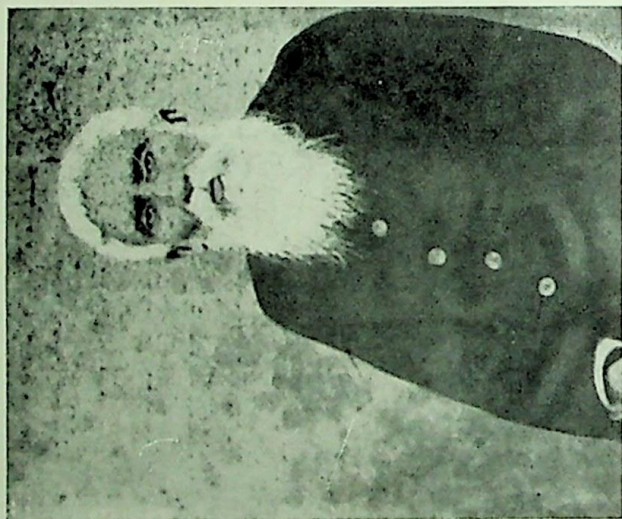
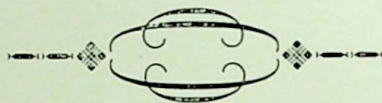
His Work in South Africa. At the early age of 12 years Pandit Bhawani Dayal had gone to India. He returned to South Africa on 22nd December, 1912, at the age of 20 years, much changed in body, soul and mind. He was a very enthusiastic person. On his return he came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi. Without hesitation he threw himself wholeheartedly into the Satyagraha struggle launched by Gandhiji. His wife, Jagrani Devi, joined him in the campaign. For having participated in Gandhiji's famous movement prominently, he and his wife were imprisoned on 10th October, 1913.

His Services to Hindi. Being granted leave from the Satyagraha movement, Panditji concentrated on other

SWAMI BHAWANI
DAYAL SANNYASI

PT. ISHWARDUTT
VIDYALANKAR

PANDIT PRAVIN SINGH

DR. BHAGAT RAM SAHAGAL

public activities. He toured place after place in Transvaal and Natal and preached the tenets of the Vedic religion. Together with this mission he advocated the promotion of the Hindi language with great vigour. No one had up till this time served the cause of Hindi more than Pandit Bhawani Dayal. At various places he lectured on the study of the mother-tongue and started forming Hindi Pracharni Sabhas and establishing Hindi schools He did meritorious service in regard to the propagation of Hindi and opened Hindi schools in Verulam, Charlestown, Newcastle, Glencoe, Ladysmith, Durban and other towns.

A Hindi Ashram to which were attached a Hindi School and Library was instituted at Clare Estate by Panditji. After this well-publicised work he organised the first Hindi Literary Conference in Ladysmith in 1916 (see Chapter VIII for report). He next took up the editorship of "Dharma Vir", a weekly newspaper the proprietor of which was Mr. R. G. Bhalla. But the greatest service to Hindi the Panditji rendered through the medium of his weekly newspaper "Hindi". The credit of popularising the study of Hindi in South Africa goes unequivocally to Panditji.

The Panditji also carried with him wherever he went the light of Vedic religion. His Hindi Pracharni Sabhas were founded on the principles of Arya Samaj and, therefore, much thought was given to the dissemination of Vedic ideals. He laid stress on the performance of weddings according to Vedic rites, on the Upnayan and Anthyeshti Sanskars and on the cremation of bodies. In 1916, with the assistance of Mr. Jai Narain, he performed the Shuddhi Sanskar of two Muslims. This act of his invited the wrath of the Muslim community on him.

His work in the literary and religious field had earned for him the esteem of his people, so much so, that in 1925 when it was decided to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Rishi Dayanand in South Africa he was elected the Chairman of the Centenary Celebration Committee. He spent much time and energy in making the celebration a huge success. Much publicity to the function was given in his "Hindi". The inception of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal) took place on the occasion of the celebrations of the Centenary. Pandit Bhawani Dayal was elected the first President. Panditji laboured much in setting the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha on a sound footing

Initiation into the Holy Order of Sannyasa. On different missions Panditji visited India on two or three occasions. In 1922 Panditji's wife, Jagrani Devi, passed away. Pressure was brought on him to re-marry. To escape from this situation, and with a view to rendering service,

Panditji entered into the holy order of Sannyasa on 10th April, 1927, in India. Swami Bhawani Dayal was the first colonial-born Indian from South Africa to become a Sannyasi.

As a missionary of Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, India, he returned to this country in 1927. He toured all parts of South Africa and preached the doctrines of Vedic Dharma. In the monthly magazine of Sarvadeshik Sabha he wrote a number of articles. He was elected again as President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in 1933. He delivered 20 lectures, performed 15 Havan ceremonies and 12 Shuddhi Sanskars in East London. Similarly, in Northern Natal he addressed 22 meetings and officiated 13 Havan ceremonies and Vedic Kathas. He went on preaching for three months.

Missionary Work in Portuguese East Africa. Swami Bhawani Dayal had already distinguished himself in India and South Africa, but his fame had also spread to the different colonies where Indians had settled. Bordering South Africa lies Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) which has a large population of Indians. In accordance with the principles of the Arya Samaj there was established there in 1932 a " Bharat Samaj ". On the invitation of this body, every year for a month Swamji used to go out to Lourenco Marques on his religious mission. He converted a number of Indian children born of native mothers into the folds of Vedic religion. Prior to this such children embraced either Islam or Christianity. Due to the endeavours of Swamiji the Bharat Samaj erected a Vedic temple (Veda Mandir). The foundation stone of the temple was laid by Swamiji in 1937. For the last 6 years the work of religious propagation has been in the hands of an able graduate from Gurukul Kangri, Pandit Ravishankerji Vidyalankar. This year there has arrived there Pandit Suman Kumarji Vidyalankar to assist him.

In the Political Field. Swami Bhawani Dayal did not do outstanding work only in furthering the cause of the Arya Samaj, but also in the political field his services are second to none. He went to India on a number of occasions as the duly accredited delegate of the South African Indian Congress. In 1938 he was elected the President of the Natal Indian Congress. During the 45 years' existence of the Congress this was the first time that a Hindu occupied the presidential chair. It is not the purpose of this book to record his activities in the political sphere. His services to the community cannot be adequately described: they are invaluable.

SWAMI MANGLANAND PURI. From Transvaal Swami Manglanand Puri came into Natal in 1913. He delivered a number of lectures under the auspices of the Arya Yuvuk

Sabha. As he was an eloquent speaker in Hindi he impressed the Hindi-speaking people very much. Swamiji's lectures attracted many young men who became members of the Arya Samaj. As he was not able to acclimatise himself he left for India within a few months.

ARRIVAL OF PANDIT ISHWARDUTT VEDALANKAR. Pandit Ishwardutt, who had come to East Africa to do missionary work, was invited to Transvaal. From there he was brought to Natal by Arya Yuvuk Sabha. Pandit Ishwardutt was the first graduate of the Gurukul to come out to this country. He reached Durban on 22nd October, when a warm welcome was given him. Panditji commenced his work with his learned and inspiring addresses. His lectures were so impressive and interesting that people sat enchanted for hours and listened to his oration. The theme of his lectures was nct sectional. Hindus and Moslems, Parsis and Christians used to all assemble to hear his eloquent addresses. As an example of the influence that he exerted it could be quoted that when he was preaching in East Africa, Lalla Saaidasoji left his 250-rupee-monthly employment, became his disciple and accompanied Panditji wherever he went. It is indeed regrettable that when he was in America with Panditji he met a sudden death.

Besides lecturing, Panditji showed people how to perform Sanskars and Havan correctly. Daily he used to read portions of the Ramayana. Hundreds of people used to gather to listen to the Ramayana Katha and the moral effect of this on them was considerable.

Panditji also excelled in the feats of archery which he displayed for the first time in this country. He used to hold the crowds amazed by the successful performance of these feats. Control of breath (pranayam) and yogic exercises were performed. He looked frail, but because of his knowledge of pranayam he used to permit a heavy stone to be placed on his chest and broken to pieces. He was also able to stop a running car from moving forward. With equal ability he performed the feats in which Ramamurthee had excelled. He sailed for England on 16th December, 1921, leaving behind an indelible impression on the minds of all who had come in contact with him.

SANGITACHARYA PANDIT PRAVINSINGHJI. At the request of Mr. G. B. Rughubeer, Pt. Pravinsingh, who had come to East Africa, landed in South Africa on 23rd February, 1922. He was warmly received by the residents of Durban. As he was a good singer he found himself well suited in spreading the teachings of Vedic Dharma among the general public. He was old but he continued with his task with much zeal and vivacity. His songs and advices drew large crowds. After having stayed here for 5 or 6 months he

returned to India. In 1927 he was brought out once again as a Hindi Teacher by the Shri Ramayan Sabha of Overport under whose jurisdiction he taught for two years. To impart lessons in Sanskrit he opened a night class. Tuition in Hindi was also given to the girls by Panditji. He taught also for some time at Surat Hindu Association Hall. When Dr. Bhagatram arrived here he co-operated with him in disseminating the teachings of the Vedas. On behalf of Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha he rendered services gratis for a few months and then sailed away for India.

PANDIT KARAMCHANDJI. To collect funds for the Kadiana D.A.V. School Pandit Karamchand had arrived in East Africa. He reached South Africa on 1st June, 1927. Wherever he went he lectured and collected moneys for his school. He returned to India after 3 months' stay. On the occasion of his farewell he said that no funds should be collected for India from a country where there was not a single Arya Mandir or Arya School or Gurukula. The money of this country should be spent in this country for the welfare of its people. How true is the saying.

THE FOUNDER OF ARYA SAMAJES IN SOUTH AFRICA—DR. BHAGATRAM. Like other preachers, Dr. Bhagatram Sahagal had also come to East Africa for missionary work. By that time the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Natal had been established. It was learnt that he was prepared to come to South Africa if he received an invitation, so after the necessary arrangements were concluded Dr. Bhagatram, accompanied by his family, arrived in Durban on 2nd February, 1929.

Establishment of Arya Samajes. As soon as he arrived here he made his itinerary to tour Natal. He travelled from town to town and began to preach. Before his advent sufficient ground had been prepared for the growth of Arya Samajic institutions. A number of institutions were established but there were few bearing the name " Arya Samaj ". Wherever the Doctor went he spoke of the Arya Samaj movement and its organisation and advocated the establishment of Arya Samajes. As a result of his efforts new Arya Samajes were founded at Pietermaritzburg, Newcastle, Sutherlands, Port Shepstone and Stanger. The names of two societies—" Cato Manor Satya Vedic Dharma Jagyasee Sabha " and " Plessislaer Nagri Hithaishini Sabha " were changed to Arya Samajes. No other preacher in South Africa founded as many Samajes as Dr. Bhagatram did. But unfortunately the enthusiasm with which the Samajes were founded died down after his departure. During his 6 months' stay here the Doctor performed Shuddhi Sanskars and Havan ceremonies.

Formation of Stri Samaj. Dr. Bhagatram was the first preacher who had come out to this country with his wife and children. His wife was also an educated person and, therefore, it was easy to preach among the womenfolk. Doctorji and his family stayed at the residence of Mr. M. Moonoo whose family was a cultured one. His wife, son and daughter-in-law gave the Doctor and his wife all the support they required in their task. On 25th May, 1929, the first Stri Arya Samaj in South Africa was established.

Contact with Pt. Ramgovind Trivedi. Desirous of strengthening the foundation of the Arya Samaj movement, Dr. Bhagatram established Arya Samajes at various places. Whilst he was busy advancing the cause of the Arya Samaj there arrived in this country from Mauritius a Sanatanist priest, Pt. Ramgovind Trivedi. The first welcome reception was accorded to him by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and several times the Sabha invited him to its meetings. It was unfortunate that Trivediji failed to work in this country with a spirit of tolerance, understanding and co-operation. He was not able to harmonise his work with that done by other preachers. His great desire was to form a Sanatan Dharma Maha Mandal. Because of two different approaches to eradicate religious and social weaknesses the Hindi community became divided. On a few occasions very lively meetings were held, the audience becoming emotional. Spirited attacks were made against each other. On the expiry of his period Trivediji sailed away to India. Dr. Bhagatram also left this country on 7th July for England after a fitting farewell had been given him and his family by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal).

CHAPTER IV

The Centenary of the Birth of Rishi Dayanand and the Inception of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha

In the month of February, 1925, at Muttra, the centenary of the Birth of Rishi Dayanand was celebrated. The event was also observed in the colonies populated with Indian settlers. In South Africa it was decided to celebrate this great occasion in a fitting manner.

The first suggestion in this connection came from Mr. D. Satyadeva, the President of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha, an institution which by this time had by its activities become sufficiently popular. A large and important meeting was convened by the Sabha of all followers of Vedic Dharma in Natal on 2nd November, 1924. Delegates from 10 to 12 Aryan societies and other great Aryan notabilities were present at this meeting. From the chair Mr. Satyadeva outlined the importance of celebrating the centenary of Rishi Dayanand. His suggestion found support with Pandit Bhawani Dayal and delegates of participating societies. So for this express purpose a body styled as "South African Rishi Dayanand Birth Centenary Celebration Committee" was inaugurated. The officials of this were Pandit Bhawani Dayal (Chairman), Mr. Satyadeva (Secretary), and Mr. B. A. Maghrajh (Treasurer). On the formation of this body elaborate preparations were made for the celebrations. Adequate publicity was given to the celebrations through the medium of the "Hindi" newspaper by Pandit Bhawani Dayal. In order to divide the work a number of sub-committees were formed. Twenty-nine sittings of the sub-committees were held.

Birth Centenary Celebrations. Rishi Dayanand Birth Centenary Celebrations commenced on 16th February and lasted till 22nd at the Hindu Tamil Institute, Durban. Daily for 1½ hours a great yag was performed to mark the occasion. The mantras of 20 chapters of Yajur Veda were recited. For the first time in this country a yag on such a

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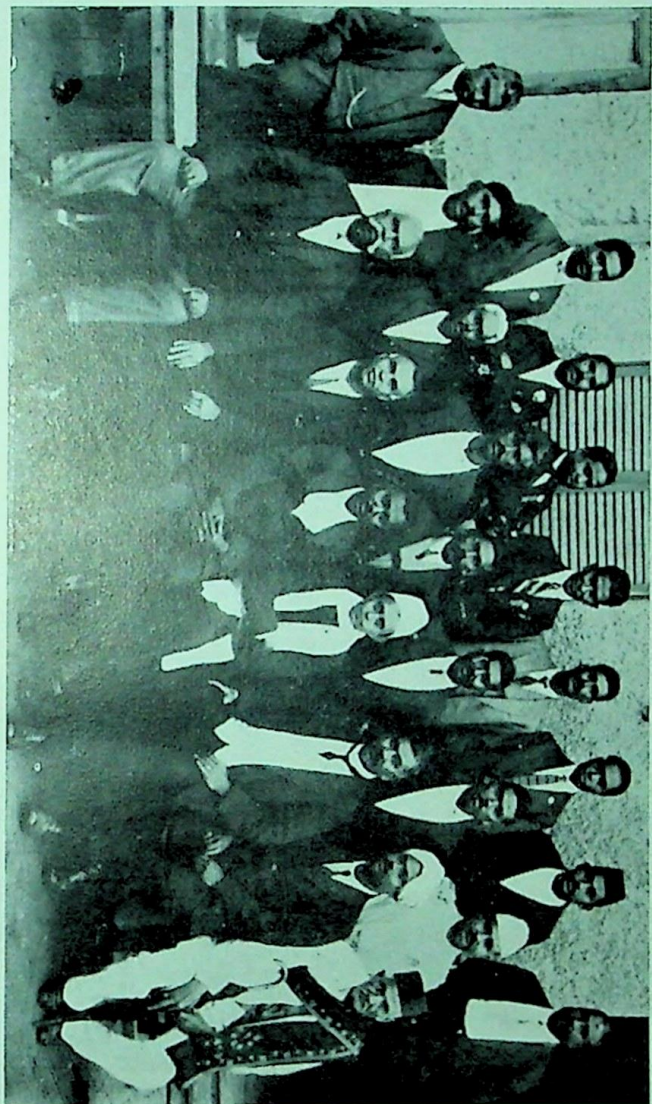
South African Rishi Dayanand Birth Centenary Celebration Committee

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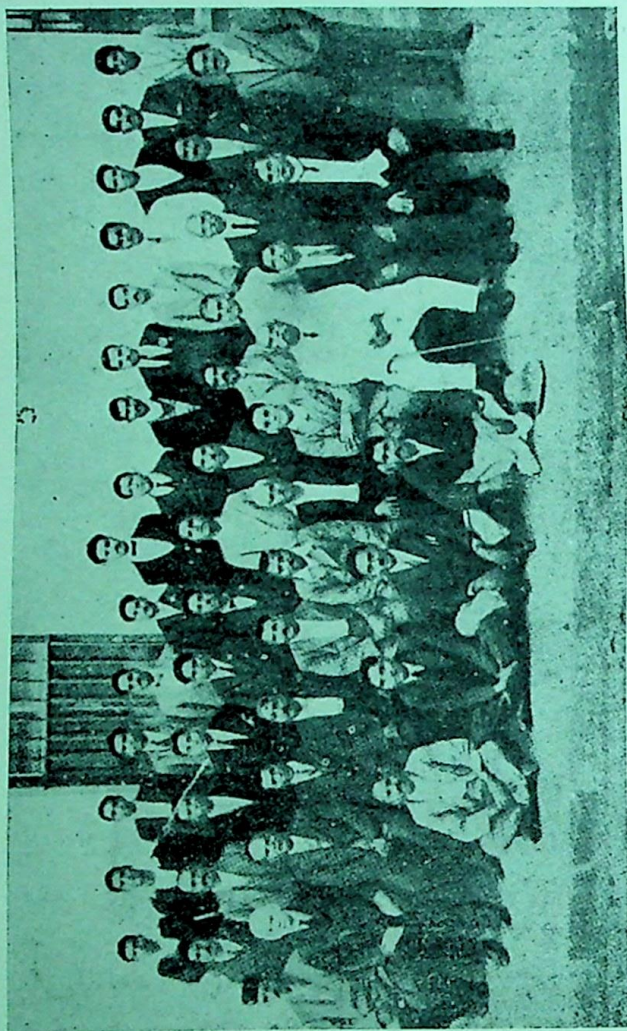

FIRST OFFICIALS AND DELEGATES (1925)

large scale was performed. Pt. V. C. Nayanarajh was the officiating priest and he fulfilled his post very ably. The entire expenses of this great yag were borne by the well-known resident of Ladysmith, Babu Rughoonath Singh.

The celebration lasted each day from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m Lectures and reading of papers by learned persons; songs and talks on the biography of Dayanand, principles of Arya Samaj, culture and mother tongue; and other topics formed part of the programme. Amongst the speakers were Pandit Bhawani Dayal, Messrs. P. R. Pather, S. N. Richard, F. Ramlagan, S. L. Singh, S. Bhagwandeen, D. Satyadeva, R. M. Naidoo, Mokamchand Varman and T. M. Naicker. Although Mr. Richard was a Christian youth he showed much devotion to Rishi Dayanand. The Chairman of the Celebration Committee, Pt. Bhawani Dayal, conducted the entire week's proceedings very ably. His educative addresses proved very effective.

Conference of Students. On this occasion a conference of students was also organised. This was attended by students from a number of Hindi schools. The programme comprised speeches, competitions, songs, hymns, etc. Notable amongst those who participated and held the audience spell-bound were Kumari Dharmadevi, Kumari Kanakpathie and Kumar Tilak. Suitable prizes were presented to the successful competitors.

Procession. One of the highlights of the celebrations was a procession of delegates and others interested. It took place on 21st February and it was the first time that such a grand procession had been organised. With the flag of "AUM" fluttering in the air the procession started from Rawat's Bioscope Hall in Victoria Street. Songs and sweet music of the bands rent the air. Every now and then shouts of "Vedic Dharma ki jai" were heard. The procession, providing a spectacular sight to the onlookers, terminated at Hindu Tamil Institute.

The First Vedic Conference. The celebrations culminated in the holding of the first Vedic Conference which was attended by 136 representatives from different religious institutions. More than one thousand people were present. For that time it was a very huge gathering. Parsi, Muslim and Christian friends also attended the functions. This conference is comparable to that convened by Swami Shankeranandji in 1912. Mr. R. K. Kapitan was the Chairman of the Welcome Reception Committee. It was through his efforts that the visiting delegates were comfortably accommodated. The President of the Conference was Babu Rughoonathsingh, of Ladysmith.

The Conference was grandly opened on 21st February, 1925, at 2.30 p.m., in the Rawat's Bioscope Hall, Victoria

Street, Durban. After the Presidential Address and a few songs the Conference was adjourned to the next day. When the Conference reassembled the following day at 10.30 a.m. the programme was of special interest to the ladies. Mrs. Kusumi, Mrs. R. M. Naidoo and Mrs. S. Bhagwandin read interesting papers on Education of Women, Purdah Custom, and other topics.

Seven important resolutions were passed by this Conference. They were on: (1) abstinence from indulgence in alcoholic drinks, (2) performance of the 16 Sanskars, (3) the saying of Sandhya daily and performance of Havan and other daily routine, (4) brotherly feeling towards the poor and the downtrodden, (5) removal of caste system, (6) mother tongue, and (7) female education.

The following institutions were represented at the Conference: Arya Yuvuk Sabha, Durban; Arya Hindi Ashram, Clare Estate; Satya Vedic Dharma Jigyasi Sabha, Cato Manor; Hindi Pracharni Sabha, Sydenham; Arya Samaj, Ladysmith; Hindu Young Men's Association, Newcastle; Hindu Pracharni Sabha, Newcastle; Hindu Young Men's Association, Pietermaritzburg; Vidya Pracharni Sabha, Pietermaritzburg; Veda Dharma Sabha, Pietermaritzburg; Vidya Pracharni Sabha, Rooikopjes; Young Men's Society, Point; Nagari Pracharni Sabha, Springfield; Arya Yuvuk Mundal, Sea Cow Lake; Vedic Sanmargi Sabha, Umgeni; and Nagri Pracharni Sabha, Camp Drift.

Pt. Ishwardutt Vidyalankar, Mr. Devi Dayalji and Mr. C. V. Pillay were elected to represent this Committee in the Muttra celebrations of the centenary of the Birth of Rishi Dayanand. The centenary celebrations were held not only in Durban but also in Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith and other places.

Inception of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal). The outstanding achievement of the centenary celebrations and the first Vedic Conference was the inception of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. As a result of the missionary work of Swami Shankeranandji, Pandit Bhawani Dayal and other preachers the principles of the Arya Samaj were well propagated. A number of Aryan societies were established in the province but there was no central organisation to co-ordinate and unify their work. Even there was no such organisation to embrace all Hindus. The Hindu Maka Sabha founded by Swami Shankeranandji was almost dead. On account of existing differences attempts to resuscitate it were in vain. When Mr. Satyadeva had proposed the holding of the centenary celebrations he had in mind the creation of a central organisation for the Aryans. The proposal to bring into existence such a representative body found ready favour with the delegates attending the conference.

On 22nd February, 1925 (Shiva Ratri Day) at the first Vedic Conference Mr. R. M. Naidoo moved the third resolution which read: "For the purpose of preaching the tenets of the Vedic Religion a body named 'Central Aryan Vedic Society' be formed." In amendment to this proposal Pandit Bhawani Dayal moved: "The delegates attending the Rishi Dayanand Centenary Celebrations resolve to establish an Arya Pratinidhi Sabha through whose medium the cause of Vedic Religion be advanced." The mover of the proposal accepted the amendment and in this way it was unanimously agreed to establish the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha.

It was decided to have Durban as the headquarters. The first officials of the Sabha were Pt. Bhawani Dayal (President); Mr. B. A. Maghrajh (Hon. Secretary); Mr. P. R. Pather (Assistant Secretary) and Mr. R. K. Kapitan (Hon. Treasurer). Within one month both the general and assistant secretaries resigned as they found the work unmanageable. Mr. B. Udit was elected to do the secretarial work. At the subsequent election Mr. D. Satyadeva was elected the General Secretary. Ever since then he has held this important post and has continued to discharge his duties in a highly efficient manner. It is also due to his untiring efforts over the last 25 years that it has been possible to hold the Silver Jubilee celebrations.

Affiliation to Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, India. After the establishment of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha it was decided to affiliate the Sabha to the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (International Aryan League) of India so as to bring the different units under the control of one large powerful centralised organisation. In keeping with this decision the Sabha was affiliated to the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha on 23rd October, 1927.

CHAPTER V

ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA— Conference and Gatherings

After its inception the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha embarked on various undertakings for the upliftment of the Hindus of this country. The most important of these was the task of organising and holding conferences. Periodically conferences have been convened to revitalise and energise the interest of the Hindus in their religion and culture. Through the holding of these conferences it was possible to resuscitate the Hindu Maha Sabha of South Africa, inaugurate the Hindi Shiksha Sangh and adopt important resolutions.

A brief report is being given hereunder of the most outstanding conferences.

Vedic Conferences. During its 25 years of existence the Sabha has organised 6 conferences of far-reaching significance.

1st Vedic Conference. This conference was held on 16th February, 1925, when the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was established. (For report see Chapter IV.)

2nd Vedic Conference. The second conference was held in Ladysmith on 3rd October, 1925, when practically all the institutions of the Aryans participated. Pandit Bhawani Dayal was elected the President of the Conference and Pt. Ramsunder Patak the Chairman of the Reception Committee. Mr. D. Satyadeva and Mr R. M. Naidoo were elected secretaries especially for the conference. The Rules and Articles of Constitution of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha were adopted at this conference. Through the generosity and enthusiasm of Babu Rughoonathsingh, of Ladysmith, it was possible to make the conference a success. With his own expenses he provided meals and sleeping accommodation to all the delegates. A few days before the commencement of the conference Mr. Satyadeva's daughter was tragically burnt but this did not prevent Mr. Satyadeva from working with a fixed purpose for the success of the conference. He had just reached Ladysmith on conference day when he suddenly received the sad news of the death of his daughter. He hastened back to Durban to attend the funeral.

3rd Vedic Conference. In the city of Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal, this conference, which was presided over by the learned Pandit R. B. Maharaj, was held on 31st July and 1st August, 1926. Mr. Gayasingh was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. Of a number of resolutions that were passed and accepted by this conference two were of outstanding importance. One resolution was in connection with the holding of a round table conference of all Natal Hindu societies so as to arrive at a formula to attain unity. When attempts were being made to translate this resolution into action the response that was forthcoming from societies was not encouraging. At this moment there was in Durban Pandit Ramgovind Trivedi, the preacher of Sanatana Dharma. The matter was also discussed with him. He was, however, opposed to unity. Efforts to revive the Hindu Maha Sabha established by Swami Shankeranandji were also foiled. Pandit Ramgovind Trivedi established Sanatana Dharma Maha Mandal which neither did any work nor permitted the different Hindu religious groups coming together.

The second important resolution was on the furtherance of the mother tongue. It was resolved that all the proceedings of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and its constituent units be conducted through the medium of the mother tongue—Hindi. Accordingly, even up to this day the minutes of the entire proceedings of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha are recorded in Hindi. There are very few societies in this country that foster the vernacular so rigidly in their deliberations as the Pratinidhi Sabha.

4th Vedic Conference. Under the presidentship of Mr. B. Bodasing the fourth Vedic Conference was held at the Hindu Tamil Institute on 11th and 12th March, 1939. The Chairman of the Reception Committee was Mr. S. L. Singh and the conference was opened by Mr. K. Baijnath. Papers were read on "Dharma" by Mr. T. M. Naicker, on "Culture" by Mr. B. M. Patel, and on "Mother Tongue" by Pandit Audhbehari. All institutions were urged to encourage the study of the mother language.

5th Vedic Conference. During the Shiva Ratri Festival on 14th and 15th February, 1942, the fifth Vedic Conference was held and the opening ceremony was performed by Babu Padamsingh. Mr. R. Bodasing presided and Mr. S. L. Singh acted as the Chairman of the Reception Committee. A number of resolutions were passed at this conference also. Pandit R. B. Maharaj delivered an address on "Dharma"; Pandit Tulsiram on "Sanskars"; and Mrs. A. P. Singh on "Education of Women". Resolutions were adopted on the equality of the two sexes in regard to the imparting of education and on the general welfare of the womenfolk.

6th Vedic Conference. This conference was held on 19th July, 1947, at the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Hall, 29 Carlisle Street. It was addressed by Pandit Dhanashankerji Shastri (Teacher at Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj Hall) on "Dharma"; by Pandit Keshoram Trivedi, of Surat Hindu Association, on "Mother Tongue." A resolution deploring the Hindu-Muslim riots was also passed

Shiva Ratri Festival (Rishi Dayanand Enlightenment Day). All the national and Aryan festivals are celebrated separately by affiliated societies in their own local areas. The Shiva Ratri Festival is, however, celebrated by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. In 1928 Shiva Ratri Week was observed. Lectures were delivered during this period by Swami Bhawani Dayal, Pt. Pravinsingh, Mr. B. M. Patel and Mr. Satyadeva. Religious and national songs were also sung. The Shiva Ratri Week was again held in 1929 when the learned lecturer from India, Dr. Bhagatram, Pt. Pravinsingh and Swami Bhawani Dayal participated and delivered inspiring lectures on various topics. Similarly in 1932, 1942 and 1944 Shiva Ratri Week was observed. In 1942 during the festive week, children's competitions, women's meeting and the 5th Vedic Conference were held. In other years celebrations were confined to only one day.

Children's Gatherings. A number of the societies affiliated to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha conduct Hindi schools. With a view to creating children's interest in the study of Hindi, acquainting them with Vedic and Arya Samajic principles and providing opportunity to the public to see the work of the students the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha has from time to time organised gatherings of children. Both boys and girls from schools run by numerous societies have participated in these competitions. The programme has consisted of speeches, songs, elocution, dialogues and short sketches. Competitors occupying the 1st, 2nd and 3rd positions have been presented with suitable prizes.

Aryan Conference. In 1932, on 5th March (Shiva Ratri Day) an Aryan Conference was held. The object of the conference was to re-awaken and revivify the Arya Samajists. Their attention was drawn to their religious duties and general conduct and they were exhorted to recite the Sandhya daily and perform Havan and other daily duties. Resolutions on increasing members of the Arya Samaj and the erection of the Veda Mandir (Vedic Temple) were also passed.

Rishi Dayanand's Death Semi-Centenary Commemoration. In 1933 Rishi Dayanand's Death Semi-Centenary was commemorated at Ajmere in India. In this country also the event was observed for a week from 16th to 23rd October. Meetings were held at Cato Manor, Clairwood, Gandhi

Library and Hindu Tamil Institute. On this occasion the President of the Sabha, Swami Bhawani Dayal, and other speakers spoke forcibly on the life of Dayanand and the principles of the Arya Samaj. A Vidyarati Samalan (Students' Conference) was also held.

Hindu Conference: The occasion of the Semi-Centenary event was seized to organise all the Hindus under one banner. Arrangements were made for the holding of a Hindu Conference. It was considered advisable to resuscitate the dormant Hindu Maha Sabha established by Swami Shankeranandji in order to consolidate the Hindus. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha had adopted a resolution for this purpose at its third Vedic Conference but it did not find support then. Endeavours were renewed on this occasion. Eighty societies were represented at this conference which resolved to revive the Hindu Maha Sabha. In this way a common platform was created for all the Hindus. Ever since then the Maha Sabha has functioned actively in the best interests of the Hindu community.

Priests' Conference. In this country performance of weddings according to Vedic rites has gradually gained ground, but the different priests did not officiate in strict accordance with the Sanskar Vidhi. Each one differed slightly from the other. To overcome this undesirable practice a conference of priests was convened in the Sabha Hall on 1st and 2nd July, 1944. Pandit Audhbehari presided over this conference. The Gurukul Snatak (graduate) brought by a Johannesburg Gujerati institution — Pandit Sudhir Kumarji Vidyalankar — was also present and he guided the conference ably. The conference considered all and sundry matters—from the priest's gown to the throwing of flowers and rice on the bride and bridegroom at the time of offering blessing. It was finally decided to perform weddings as directed by the Sanskar Viddhi.

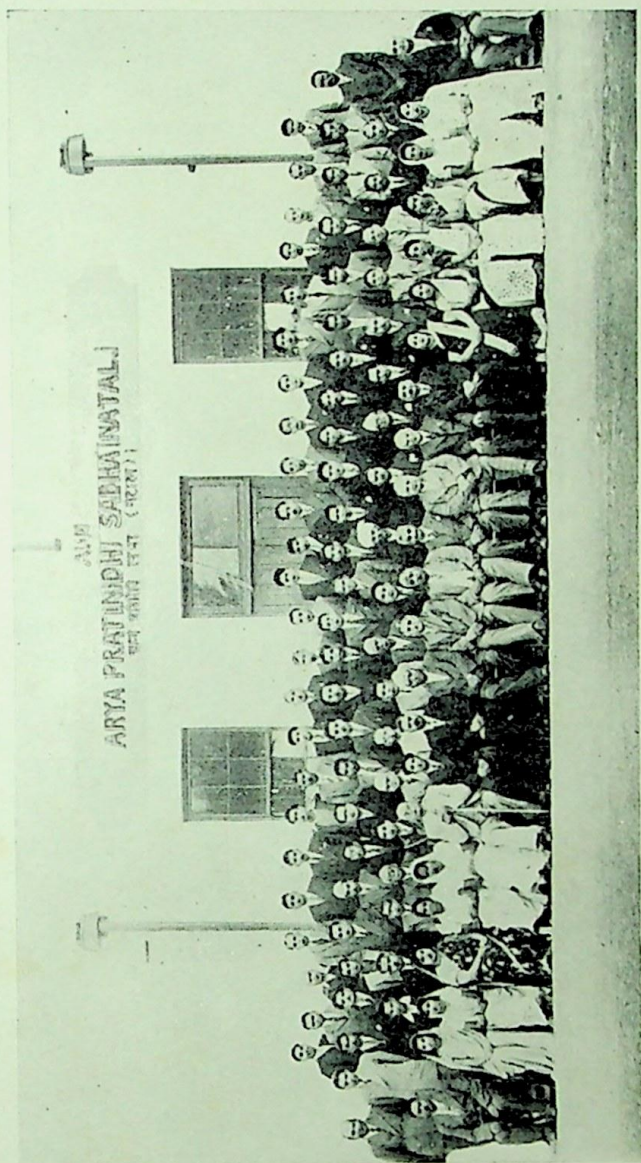
Special General Meeting. A Special General Meeting to consider the holding of weekly services, Hindi syllabus and census-taking of Aryans was held on 17th and 18th of November, 1945. Pandit Audhbehari presided. A uniform programme for the weekly services and Hindi syllabuses from Introductory to 8th Standard were accepted. It was decided to take a census of all Aryans, but due to practical difficulties the plan did not materialise.

Hindi Samalan (Conference). At the request of Pandit Nardev Vedalankar, a graduate of Gurukul Kangri, India, a Hindi conference of representatives from all Hindi Schools in Natal was held on 24th and 25th April, 1948. To bring all the schools under one central control, an independent

body, named "Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal)" was given birth. (For report see Chapter VIII).

First Aryan Youth Conference. The Pratinidhi Sabha organised the first Aryan Youth Conference on 31st July, 1948. At this Conference, Pandit Nardev Vedalankar spoke on "Dharma and Culture"; Dr. N. P. Desai on "Health and Longevity"; Mr. Sonny Moodley on "Physical Culture," and Mr. Harisingh on "Sangeet." There were also other speakers. Important resolutions on four of these subjects were passed.

Similarly, several conferences and meetings have been organised by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. As far as possible attempts have been made to give effect to the resolutions passed.

ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA — NATAL

OFFICIALS AND DELEGATES (1946)

ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA — NATAL

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS – 1950
With Pt. Gangaprasad Upadhyaya and Pt. Nardev Vedalankar

CHAPTER VI

Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Vedic Temple

Its Erection and General Activities

Purchase of Property. Ever since the inception of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Arya Samajists have been keenly desirous of possessing their own hall. On several occasions the matter was discussed, but it was not an easy matter to embark on the project. Speaking generally, the Arya Samajists in this country are financially not too strong, therefore, to collect funds for the purchase of a property has not been free from difficulties. Ten years after its establishment the Sabha took definite steps in this direction, and with the efforts of its zealous and generous president, Mr. R. K. Kapitan, it purchased a property in Carlisle Street, Durban, on 1st April, 1936, for £2,000. The first instalment of £100 was paid by Mr. Kapitan, the President.

Celebration of Redemption of Debt on Property. The Sabha had purchased the property, but the debt on it had still to be paid, so a sub-committee, consisting of the liberal-hearted late Mr. B. Bodasing, Mr. R. Bodasing, Mr. S. L. Singh, Mr. D. G. Satyadeva, Mr. G. Merhoy and Mr. M. Moonoo was formed. Through their perseverence and untiring efforts the Sabha was able to liquidate its debt and free its property in 1941. To mark the redemption of debt a happy function was held on 7th December, 1941.

"Havan" on Entry of Hall. Though the Sabha had purchased a property to erect its Vedic Temple, the building existing on the property was not in a condition to permit the holding of meetings, etc., in it. To erect a large hall was not possible then, so it was decided that with a little cost the building be converted into a suitable hall as a temporary expedient. Up till then the Sabha had to make use of halls belonging to other societies. When the scheme materialised, the entry into the hall was marked by the holding of a celebration on 4th February, 1943, ever since which all the meetings and functions of the Sabha—big and small—are held in the Sabha Hall.

Declaration of Magnanimous Donation by Mr. R. Bodasing. The task of erecting a suitable Vedic Temple has

been found to be a difficult one. Much finance is required for its accomplishment. With the grace of the All-Merciful Lord, the Sabha found a large-hearted philanthropist in the person of Mr. R. Bodasing—the present President of the Sabha—who is a resident of Stanger. He is a well-known sugar magnate. On 22nd February, 1944, he made a public statement to donate the sum of £10,000 (approximately 132,000 rupees) towards the erection of the Temple. Encouraged by this promised donation, the Sabha has already finalised a plan of the proposed Temple. During the celebrations of the Silver Jubilee in February, 1950, the foundation stone of this Vedic Temple will be laid by Mr. R. Bodasing. The ambition of the Aryans is coming to fulfilment after a long expectation.

List of Donors and Trustees. There have been several persons who have assisted the Pratinidhi Sabha morally and financially. Contributors of amounts of £150 or over automatically become Life Trustees of the Sabha. Those that have rendered meritorious services to the Sabha over a long period have also been elected to the post of trustees. Some of the principal donors are as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
The late Mr. B. Bodasing	250	0	0
Mrs. J. B. Daniel	150	0	0
The late Mr. B. Sookdeo Singh	110	0	0
Mr. R. Bodasing	105	0	0
Mr. B. M. Patel	101	0	0
The late Mr. R. K. Kapitan	100	0	0
The late Mr. K. Baijnath	75	0	0
Mr. J. Maganlal	75	0	0
Mr. G. Merhoy	60	0	0
Arya Sangeet Mundal	52	10	0
Mr. M. Moonoo	50	0	0
Mr. B. A. Maghrajh	50	0	0
The late Mr. L. Bodasing	50	0	0
Messrs. Choonilal Bros.	50	0	0
Mr. S. Budree	50	0	0
Mr. B. Gangaram	50	0	0
Messrs. R. K. Dewan & Sons	32	10	0
Mr. D. G. Satyadeva	25	0	0
Messrs. R. Debba Bros.	25	0	0
Mr. V. M. Maistry	25	0	0
Mr. B. Purmasir	25	0	0
Messrs. P. Seebran & Raghu Bros.	25	0	0
Messrs. Gandhi & Co.	25	0	0
Mr. C. N. Rana	25	0	0
Mr. R. B. Chetty	25	0	0
Messrs. Victoria Produce Co.	25	0	0
Mr. J. Rampersad	25	0	0
The late Mr. L. Rajkoomar	25	0	0

The late Mr. B. Bachoo	25	0	0
Messrs. B. J. Mistry Bros.	25	0	0
Mr. Ramgoolam	25	0	0
Mr. G. Rampersad	25	0	0
The late Mr. B. B. Maharaj	25	0	0
The late Mr. N. Bodasing	25	0	0

Donors of amounts less than £25 have been very many. The following have been elected as honorary trustees:—Mr. B. A. Maghrajh, Mr. B. M. Patel, Pt. R. B. Maharaj, Mr. D. G. Satyadeva, Mr. R. Bodasing, Mr. M. Moonoo, Mr. S. L. Singh, Mr. V. C. Nayanarajh, Mr. P. B. Singh, Mr. G. Merhoy and Mr. H. Bodasing.

Various Activities of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Matters of far-reaching importance have been accomplished by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha through its conferences, preachers and affiliated units. It is through the constant efforts of the Sabha that Aryan culture and Indian civilisation still flourish in this land so distant from India. Whilst concentrating on major problems, the Sabha has not failed to engage its attention on matters which are, comparatively speaking, not so weighty and vital. The motive has been to reinforce the Aryan mode of life and prevent it from decaying. A brief account is given here of some of these activities:—

(1) **Preaching in Jails and Hospitals:** The Sabha made an application to the Union Government for permission to preach to the Indian convicts on religious duties and good morals on Sundays in Natal jails. It is pleasing to record that the request has been acceded to, consequently, for the last 25 years prayers are offered and talks on religious obligations given by preachers of the Sabha in the jails of Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith and Stanger. The effect of this type of work in the jails has been noticed on the prisoners, who have shed tears in expressing their regret at the crimes committed. On release many of them made endeavours to reform themselves. The names of those who have preached in the jails are Mr. D. Satyadeva, Pt. V. C. Nayanarajh, Pt. Jugmohan, Pt. R. B. Maharaj, Pt. R. Bunwari, Pt. Lakshminarain, Pt. Ramsunder Patak and the late Babu Rughoonath Singh.

Similarly, permission has been received to preach in the hospitals. The Sabha had appealed to the hospital authorities to cremate the corpses of pauper Indians, but due to the high expense involved this has not been practicable. There is a great need of priests who could visit the hospitals and pray for the relief of pain and sufferings of the patients. The Christian priests visit patients of all religious denominations and pray for their recovery. This has a great psychological effect on the minds of the patients.

(2) **Protest against the teaching of Scripture lessons:** Hindu children in Government-Aided and Mission Schools were required to say prayers from the Bible. The Sabha strongly protested against this practice. In a similar manner, Hindu children were compelled to take Scripture lessons in the Christian Mission Indian Schools On 15th February, 1942, at its Vedic Conference a resolution taking strong exception to this treatment was passed. The result of these protests was that the Education Department agreed to permit Hindu parents to withdraw their children from participation in Scripture lessons if they so desired. Nowadays Hindu prayers are said in schools the proprietors of which are Hindu institutions.

(3) **Objectionable Publication in "Indian Views" and Pastor Rowlands' scathing remarks on Lord Krishna:** The Durban Muslim weekly, "The Indian Views," in its issue of 2nd September, 1927, made a scathing attack in vulgar terms of Hindu gods and goddesses. At the meeting of the Sabha held on 12th September, 1927, a resolution deploring the insulting and humiliating reference was passed and forwarded to the Natal Indian Congress and other societies. It was stated that such publications were a source of religious friction and animosity.

Pastor Rowlands, of the Bethesda Temple, published in his monthly bulletin, "Moving Waters," comparative accounts of the biographies of Lord Krishna and Jesus Christ with the ulterior motive of degrading Krishna. The Sabha protested in the strongest of terms against this sinister design. The Mayor of Durban was apprised of this publication. Ultimately, the Padre had to apologise for his action.

(4) **The Marriage of Sir Sayed Raza Ali:** In January, 1936, Sir Sayed Raza Ali—the Agent-General for the Government of India in South Africa—decided to marry a Hindu girl, Miss Samy of Kimberley. Hindu society agitated against this move. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal) took up the cudgels on behalf of the Hindu community and organised a monster mass meeting of Hindus on 19th January, 1936. Hundreds of Hindus attended this meeting. Spirited attacks were made on Raza Ali, culminating in a resolution totally opposing the marriage. At the request of the Sabha, several societies passed at their meetings resolutions condemning the proposed marriage. Hindu societies were urged to withdraw their support and co-operation given to Raza Ali. Through the initiative of the Sabha the whole Hindu world of South Africa rose as a man and raised its voice against the marriage. The result of the agitation was that Miss Samy remained a Hindu up till the time of her death. A marriage by registration only was effected.

(5) **Satyagraha in Hyderabad and Proscription of Satyarth Prakash (Light of Truth):** The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha being affiliated to Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (International Aryan League), India, carries on its activities in consonance with its instructions and principles. In 1939 when the Nizam of Hyderabad imposed a ban on the practice of certain Hindu religious duties in his State, the Arya Samajists were the first in the field to launch a campaign of Satyagraha. The Pratinidhi Sabha of Natal identified itself with the movement by rendering both moral and financial support. The Sabha was deeply concerned about the outcome of the struggle. Its sympathies were with the movement all along. Likewise, when the Government of Sindh banned the 14th Chapter of the Light of Truth, the Sabha called a meeting and passed a resolution of strong protest.

(6) **Publication of the History of the Arya Sumaj Movement in South Africa:** The message of Arya Samaj was first brought into this country by Professor Bhai Parmanand. In 1930 it was exactly 25 years since Bhaiji's arrival so the Sabha decided to publish an account of the Arya Samaj movement in this country during that period. After much labour, the Secretary of the Sabha (Mr. Satyadeva) managed to compile a full record of the 25 years' activities. It embodied accounts of the work of all the Vedic missionaries who had come to South Africa, the early history of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, activities of affiliated bodies and the biographies of the principal workers in the Arya Samajic field. A number of photos were also included in the publication. The printing was to be done by Arya Bhaskar Press, Agra. The President of the Sabha, Mr. R. K. Kapitan, and Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi took great interest to see the publication through. When all the copies were ready they were sent to Bombay. At that time in 1932 in India there was a campaign afoot to boycott British goods. In several places bonfires were made of these goods. Unfortunately the place where all these copies were kept was set on fire and in this way every copy was reduced to ashes. All labour and money spent in the preparation of the history went in vain. Because of financial difficulties, the Sabha was not in a position to reprint the history.

In 1933, on the occasion of Rishi Dayanand Death Semi-Centenary Celebrations, a biographical sketch of Rishi Dayanand was published in English. In co-operation with the Sabha, Mr. Naran published the Sandhya in Gujerati.

(7) **Sanskrit Class:** One of the prominent Arya Samajists—Mr. G. Merhoy—had sent his son, Harishanker, to Gurukul Kangri. In 1943 Harishanker returned to this country with the degree of Ayurvedalankar. He was warmly welcomed by the Sabha at a public reception. A

class in Sanskrit was later opened by him. At first a large number of students enrolled, but gradually the number diminished. The class had to be discontinued on the departure of Harishanker to India.

(8) **Support in India's struggle for political liberation:** Though the field of work of the Sabha was mainly religious and social, it interested itself sympathetically in India's fight for freedom. Resolutions giving support to and associating themselves with Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha campaign, his fasts and other occasions, were passed and sent. A cablegram congratulating the Prime Minister of India on the achievement of independence on 15th August, 1947, was transmitted. The large-scale massacres that followed the attainment of independence were deplored in a resolution passed by the Sabha. To help the victims of the riots, contributions were collected and sent to India.

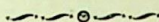
(9) **Mourning and Prayer Meetings:** To mourn and express sympathy at the death of Arya Samajic and national leaders, prayer meetings have been held whenever necessary. Special meetings were convened on the assassination of Swami Shradhanand and Mahatma Gandhi and strongly-worded resolutions deploring the brutal acts were passed. Prayers for the peace of the departed souls were also offered. Similar resolutions were passed on the death of Lala Lajpat Rai, Pt. Nathuram Shanker Sharma and Mahatma Narain Swami. A special meeting for the purpose of offering sympathy with the victims of the Indo-African riots of January 1949 and of praying for the restoration of racial amity and peace was held by the Sabha. Pandit Nardev Vedalankar offered prayers for concord and goodwill by reciting a number of Vedic mantras.

(10) **Miscellaneous:** In various other activities of a similar nature the Sabha has interested itself. As a result of an application made to the Government by the Sabha, the Hindus were exempted from lighting their earthen lamps on Deepavali night during the black-out period of the second World War. In December 1945, acting on the instruction of the Sabha, the affiliated units performed Maha Yagya and prayed for rain to break the drought.

When the Funeral Undertakers' Union decided to withdraw their services on Sundays, the Sabha took up the matter with them and was successful in obtaining for the Indian undertakers permission to serve the Hindu community on Sundays.

The Sabha has been ever alive to its responsibilities in safeguarding and protecting the interests of the Hindus particularly in the religious, social and cultural fields.

CHAPTER VII

Arya Samaj and the Religious and Social Conditions of the Hindus

The credit of protecting Aryan culture and Indian civilisation overseas must go to the Arya Samaj. Not only in South Africa but in other lands populated by Indians, the existence and maintenance of Eastern culture and traditions have been made possible singularly through the efforts of the Arya Samaj and by the acceptance of the line of thought expounded by Rishi Dayanand. The orthodox Hindu religion based on superstitions and a mythological conception of God cannot hold its ground in an environment where there is the impact of different religions, cultures, nationalities and races. The prestige of Hinduism both in India and elsewhere can be enhanced only on the basis of the scientific and logical interpretation of the Vedas given by the religious reformer, Rishi Dayanand. It is because of this that those Indians who desired to protect Hinduism in these remote parts of the world had to seek the assistance of the Arya Samaj and the "Light of Truth."

In this connection the opinion of Sadhu C. F. Andrews is illuminating. He writes: "I have been greatly impressed by whatever has been done by the Arya Samaj for the upliftment of the Indians settled overseas. The Arya Samaj is the only institution whose attention is particularly devoted to the protection of Hindi—the national language of India and Aryan culture . . . . Amongst the Indian organisations that can serve the Indians in the European colonies there isn't any more active, powerful and interested than the Arya Samaj."

In South Africa, too, the Arya Samaj has held the same position. Its preachers, workers, institutions and schools have all helped to alter the entire outlook on life of the Hindus. For 50 years the Hindus that were groping in darkness have to-day become conversant with their culture and civilisation through the activities of the Arya Samaj and are now living according to this new enlightened conception. An account of what effect the Arya Samaj movement had in modifying the religious and social structure is briefly given hereunder:

(1) Festivals and Celebrations:

The chief means of keeping any society, nationality or culture alive is to observe and celebrate religious festivals and the births of great personages. Before the arrival of Swami Shankeranandji the Hindus of this country had almost completely forgotten its festivals. Moharrum and the vulgar form of Holi were considered to be the foremost festivals. Swamiji re-introduced Deepavali as the most significant of Hindu festivals and it is in that sense that it is celebrated nowadays. On this day all Indian schools and Hindu shops and factories are closed. Daily the festival is gaining importance and is being celebrated with grandeur and gaiety as a national event. Deepavali greeting cards are sent to friends and relatives. Nearly all Hindu institutions celebrate the births of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna which are the other important festivals of Hindus. August 15th (India Independence Day) has already become an outstanding national day for rejoicing and thanksgiving. The Shiva Ratri Festival (Rishi Dayanand Enlightenment Day) is celebrated enthusiastically by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha as an important occasion. Other festivals, provincial in origin, are observed by Tamil and Gujerati communities. In addition to these a start should be made with the observance of Raksha Bandhan, Vijaya Dashmi, and Gandhi Jayanti as national festivals.

(2) Sanskars (Ceremonies):

All Hindus attach great importance to the performance of the marriage ceremony, the earlier form of which was rather peculiar. The apparel of the bride and bridegroom was ludicrous. The bride used to be bundled up in such a manner that she was not able to see her way. These days Vedic weddings have become very popular with the young men and women. Even in orthodox Sanatanist families Vedic rites have crept in. Besides Wedding Sanskar, Choodakaran (Hair-shaving) and Naamkaran (Christening) ceremonies are also performed. Other Sanskars are hardly done. Anthyeshti Sanskar (Cremation) was also on account of the degraded state of the Hindus not in vogue. All dead bodies used to be more or less buried. Due to the propaganda done by Swami Shankeranandji and Swami Bhawani Dayal, most of the Hindus now cremate their dead ones. In a number of places fine crematoria on modern lines have been erected. The practice of cremation has also found favour with the Europeans. Graveyards are to be found everywhere, but many difficulties are encountered in purchasing lands suitable for the purpose of cremation. In order to keep the community religious-minded the need for the performance of Sanskars cannot be over-stressed.

(3) Registration of Marriages:

According to the laws of the country no marriage is considered legal until it has been registered. Therefore, no Hindu marriage is legally recognised until it is registered at the Office of the Protector of Indian Immigrants. On account of this legal requirement a number of women have had to undergo great hardships. Many an uncultured young man, without realising his responsibilities, takes shelter under this law and rejects the woman to whom he has been religiously and socially married. Such women have no legal grounds to bring their husbands to book or claim against them. The Christian and Muslim officiating priests are, however, vested with power to issue certificates of marriage which are accepted as a matter of course for the purpose of registration by the Union Government. This privilege has not been extended to the Hindu priests. In this respect several representations have been made to the Government. The Vedic Conference organised by the Sabha on 15th February, 1942, passed a resolution for the recognition of Hindu marriage officers by the Government, but so far the law has not been amended or repealed. The South African Hindu Maha Sabha has also negotiated with the Government on this question. There is need for more vigorous agitation against this drawback.

(4) Caste System:

At first the caste system here was as rigidly observed as in India, but due to different environmental factors it is slowly crumbling down. The feeling of high and low is on the waning side. A number of inter-caste marriages have also taken place. The system has entrenched itself in some orthodox families, but with others it is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Certain groups of Gujeratis and Tamilians still cling to this system which is fast dying out. Centuries-old slavish mentality cannot be eradicated in a short time.

(5) Faith in Religion:

Much devotion to tradition and superstition is seen in people belonging to the old school of thought. Faith in the fundamental principles of the Vedic religion has been created by the Arya Samaj. People with English education only are generally apathetic and indifferent to their religion, but still attempts have been made to awaken the national and religious consciousness of the average youth. Performance of havan and yag and Upanishad Kathas is fast becoming popular. Gita Week has been observed to propagate the teachings of the Gita. There is, however, an acute shortage of studious preachers and learned men who could deliver sermons and religious discourses. Similarly there is a great

dearth of religious literature, without which it is difficult to attract people towards their religion. The daily performance of havan and sandhya is done by very few people; and the attendance at weekly services leaves much more to be desired.

(6) Superstition and Blind Faith:

The general mass of Hindus are still steeped in blind faith and superstition. People cannot yet extricate themselves from the clutches of witchcraft and amulets. In illness and in difficulties a leaning towards these beliefs is evident. How superstitious people are can also be noticed on other occasions. A few years ago a person in Verulam declared himself to be the reincarnation of Krishna. Like sheep, people from far and wide in tens of thousands flocked to him daily to gain his " darshan " and receive his blessings. The suffering and the sick, the blind and the cripple went to him in the hope of being cured of their ills, but the hypocrisy of the whole situation was soon exposed. The practice of sacrificing animals in temples is on the decline, but still even in this modern age offerings of animals are made in the name of religion.

(7) Evil Practices:

Most of the people in this country are addicted to vicious and undesirable habits. The most degrading and dreadful is the excessive indulgence in alcoholic drinks. Hardly 10% of the people are not victims of this habit. Going to race-courses and gambling is another common practice. All these lead to moral degradation and financial bankruptcy. Effective steps have not been taken to counteract these habits. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha has raised its voice against these evils at its conference, but no good has been the outcome.

(8) Conversion and Shuddhi Sanskar:

During the earlier period advantage was taken of the ignorance and lack of unity among the Hindus and quite a number were converted into Islam and Christianity. Nowadays proselytisation is not carried on on the same large scale, yet the number of converts into other faiths is large. The economic position of the poorer Hindus is exploited and inducement offered for conversion. Many young men, especially those educated in English and devoid of vernacular knowledge, have embraced Christianity for the sake of marriage, etc. At first due to ignorance of the true teachings of Hinduism many people lost faith in their religion and went into other folds. This tendency has been counteracted by the periodical visits of preachers and lecturers. At present there is noticeable in people a feeling of national and religious pride. Swami Shankeranandji,

Swami Bhawani Dayal and other preachers have re-converted quite a number of Christians and Muslims into the folds of Hinduism by performing the Shuddhi Sanskar. The Arya Yuvuk Sabha has done creditable work in this direction. The idea of Shuddhi has still to be pushed forward. Nowadays the Hindu Maha Sabha is not slow in taking steps to prevent the conversion of Hindus. That day is still distant when the tenets of the Vedic religion could be preached among the indigenous people of this country.

CHAPTER VIII

EDUCATION & MOTHER TONGUE

Education During the Early Period. Indian labourers had settled in this country for a long time, but the education of their children was neglected. The Christian Missionary Societies were the pioneers in Indian education. They built a number of schools, but preaching of the gospel of Christianity remained their primary concern. Such a state of affairs had a bad effect on the Indian children. On the arrival of Swami Shankeranandji his attention was drawn to this vital problem of education. Before an education commission of enquiry appointed by the Natal Government in 1909 he gave evidence of outstanding importance. The attention of all the members of the Commission was focused on Indian education. The Swamiji made representations on behalf of the Indians to Sir Mathew Nathan, the Governor of Natal, and pleaded for free and compulsory education for Indians. According to the law of the country Indian children could receive education only up to the age of 14 years. Swamiji directed his energies towards the removal of this restriction and it is pleasing to note that he was successful in this respect.

The Rt. Hon. Shrinivasa Sastri's Efforts. The position of Indian education remained unsatisfactory and the Government gave little attention to it. Thousands of children of school-going age grew up illiterate. In 1927 Mr. Sastri came to this country as the Agent-General for the Government of India. Through his efforts a survey was made of Indian education. A Commission of Enquiry was appointed. The Government of India was represented on this commission by Mr. Kichlu and Miss Gordon. Evidence before this commission was given by the Natal Indian Congress. The outcome of the commission was beneficial to the Indians. The Government paid greater attention to Indian education and more money began to be spent on it.

The Indian community also made every effort in the direction of self-help. They collected funds and put up schools everywhere with the asistance of a Government grant of ½ and later ⅓ of the cost of the buildings. Arya Samajic institutions did not lag behind in this direction. They are also proprietors of a number of Government-Aided Indian schools. In order that Indian students may be given secondary education up to the Matriculation standard a high school named "Sastri College", towards the erection of which the Indian community contributed £20,000, was established. Some of the products of Sastri College are today lawyers and doctors; others teachers with degrees.

The Serious Question of Vernacular Education. Mr. Sastri can be said to have solved the problem of English education for the time being, but in regard to the teaching of the vernaculars he did disservice to the Indian community. To discuss the question of submitting evidence before the Government-appointed education commission and to consider the position of vernaculars in the Indian schools a conference was convened in Kimberley by the South African Indian Congress. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and other institutions moved resolutions supporting the inclusion of vernaculars in the school curriculum. Swami Bhawani Dayal was also present at this conference. Mr. Sastri spoke expressing his strong disapproval of giving a place to vernaculars in the curriculum. Majority of the delegates attending the conference supported Mr. Sastri. Swami Bhawani Dayal, Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee and others demanded that the matter be reconsidered. When the subject was reintroduced the majority changed their views and did not fall in line with the thought expressed by Mr. Sastri. Resolutions in favour of the vernaculars were moved by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and circulated everywhere. Messrs. S. L. Singh, B. M. Patel and D. Satyadeva represented the Sabha on the Education Sub-Committee of the Congress. Sastri's views were even opposed here. This was a time when men of the learning and insight of Sastri could not have conceived of any Indian language assuming the status of the national language of India. Mr. Sastri had received his education through the medium of the English and, therefore, he failed to view the question of the vernaculars in its correct perspective. In spite of the popular demand for the inclusion of the vernaculars in the curriculum, the Government, being fortified by the stand taken by Sastri, rejected the idea. It is regrettable that the blow to the cause of the vernaculars should have been inflicted by an Indian of great knowledge. The effect of this disservice is still being felt. The burden of imparting vernacular education has become the responsibility of the community. On account of financial difficulties little progress could be made with the vernaculars. Their study is not considered essential

as they are not included in the curriculum, hence Indian culture is dying out. Due to the influence of the English language, Western culture, traditions and Christian beliefs have penetrated into the Hindu pattern of life.

The Languages of the Indians. The Indians who came into this country spoke different provincial languages, viz. Tamil, Hindi, Gujerati and Telegu. The Muslims of this country have hailed from the province of Gujerat and, therefore, speak the Gujerati language. They, however, acknowledge Urdu as their language. In the early days most of the Indians were illiterate in their mother tongue and hardly knew any English. They were not able to understand the language of those who came from a different province. In these circumstances Hindi, on account of its simplicity, emerged as a common language of all Indians. With the advance of English education amongst the colonial-born Indians, Hindi as well as the other vernaculars has begun to be relegated to the back. English has gained prominence. As a result, nowadays after three or four generations many young men could not speak in Hindi. Amongst the Hindi-speaking people the number possessing a knowledge of grammatically-correct Hindi is infinitesimal. It is not uncommon to find boys and girls and also women speaking English in their homes. If this state of affairs is continued for a few more decades, it is possible that no trace of Hindi or other vernaculars will be left. The propaganda that is being carried on in respect of Hindi and other vernaculars is almost negligible.

Propagation of Hindi During the Early Days—Pt. Bhawani Dayal. Swami Shankeranandji was the first to draw the attention of the people to the study of vernaculars. On the importance of the mother tongue Swamiji delivered many thought-provoking speeches, with the result that a number of Hindi schools were started.

Signal service to the cause of Hindi has been done by Pt. Bhawani Dayal. He had spent his childhood in India where he acquired a good knowledge of Hindi. On his return from India he travelled from place to place and spoke on the need for the study of Hindi. He opened a Hindi Ashram and formed a number of Hindi Pracharni Sabhas. In 1916, due to the efforts of Panditji, the first Hindi Literary Conference was held in Ladysmith. Pandit Bhawani Dayal acted as the Secretary, Babu Rughoonathsingh as the President and Mr. R. G. Bhalla as the Chairman of the Reception Committee. The second literary conference was held in Pietermaritzburg in 1917 under the presidentship of Mr. Hardevsingh. The Chairman of the Reception Committee was Mr. D. K. Soni. Pandit Bhawani Dayal left no stone unturned to make both the conferences a huge success. In this way

Hindi gained ground. Interest in Hindi was created through the medium of Mr. R. G. Bhalla's monthly paper, " Dharma Vir ", of which Panditji was the editor. Greater propaganda for Hindi was, however, done by Panditji through his own monthly paper " Hindi ". Much energy was spent by Pandit Bhawani Dayal passed away. The " Hindi " paper was ably Hindi Press. Before the publication of the first issue Mrs. Bhawani Dayal pased away. The " Hindi " paper was ably edited for four years by Panditji and thereby he distinguished himself both in this country and abroad as a champion of Hindi. During the latter portion of his life Panditji concentrated more on politics, hence Hindi suffered.

Arya Pratinidhi Sabha's Endeavours to Promote Hindi. The furtherance of Hindi occupies a prominent position in the various activities of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Resolutions on this subject have been passed at practically all its conferences. It has firmly resolved itself to conduct all its deliberations through the medium of Hindi. Moreover, it has urged the affiliated bodies to open Hndi schools. Of all the Hindi schools run in the province the majority come within the jurisdiction of societies affiliated to the Sabha. At a meeting held on 18th October, 1945, it prepared a uniform syllabus to be adopted by the different Hindi schools.

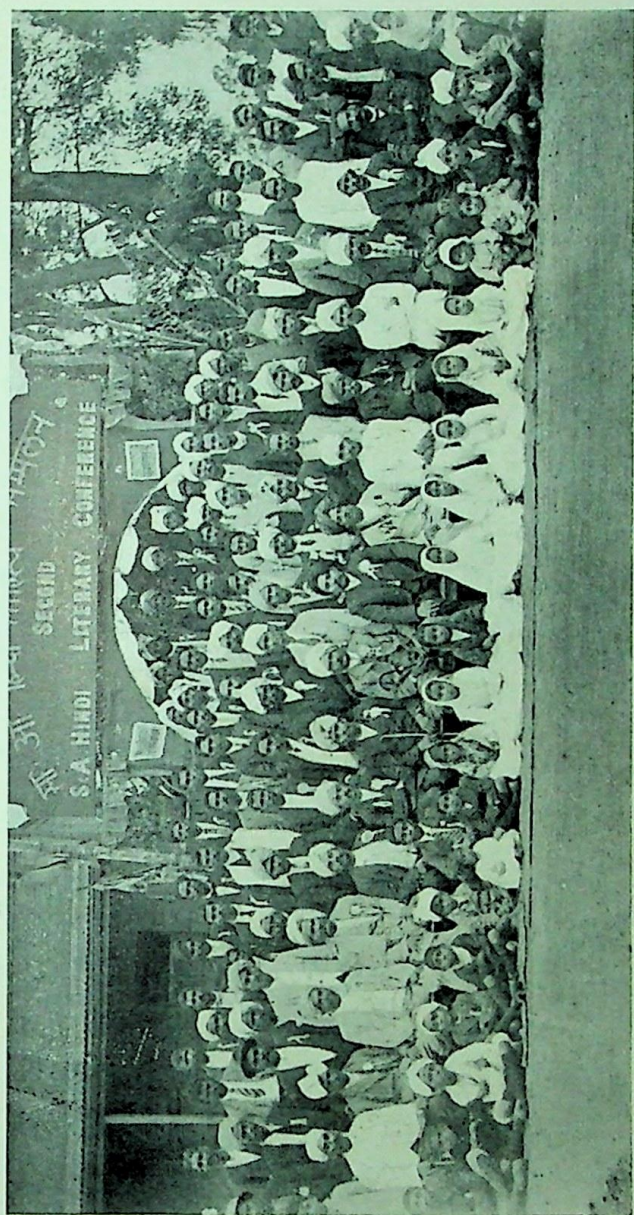
Pandit Nardev Vedalankar and Inception of Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal). At the end of 1947 Pandit Nardev Vedalankar, who had done some work in the field of Hindi education in Surat, arrived in this country as a Gujerati teacher. After surveying the situation obtaining here Panditji, being desirous of promoting Hindi, advised the Arya Pratinidhi Subha to establish an independent institution for this purpose. Accordingly, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha convened a Hindi Samalan (conference) on 24th and 25th April, 1948. All institutions interested in Hindi education were invited to this conference which was opened by Pandit Nardev Vedalankar. For the purpose of fostering Hindi a new organisation named " Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal) " was created. Not taking into consideration any religious differences the Sangh has accepted the support and co-operation of all. The conference accepted the following three basic principles:—

(1) That all Hindi schools in Natal be requested to affiliate to the Sangh.

(2) That there shall be uniformity of curriculum and syllabus in all the schools.

(3) That besides reading, Indian history, geography, arithmetic and religious lessons be taught.

Pandit Nardev Vedalankar was elected President and Mr. Sookraj Chotai and Pt. B. J. Maharaj Joint Honorary

SECOND SOUTH AFRICAN HINDI LITERARY CONFERENCE — 1917

HINDI SHIKSHA SANGH — NATAL

First Year Officials and successful Students in the Rashtra Bhaska Pravish Examination (Wardha, India) from the Durban Centre, 1949

Secretaries. The Hindi Shiksha Sangh has hammered out its constitution and begun its work. The President and the Secretary (Mr. Sookraj Chotai) had concluded all arrangements to tour Northern Natal in January, 1949, with a view to popularising Hindi language, but, unfortunately, on account of the calamitous Indo-African riots, they had to return after having visited only Pietermaritzburg and Greytown. The riots have seriously retarded the work of the Sangh.

Hindi Literary Conference. The first two literary conferences were organised by Pandit Bhawani Dayal in 1916 and 1917. They embraced the whole of South Africa. The first Natal Hindi Literary Conference was called by the Sangh on 17th October, 1948. The conference was presided over by Mr. B. M. Patel and opened by Mr. B. Purmasir. Addresses were delivered by Pandit Dwarika Maharaj (President, Sanatan Dharma Sabha, Natal) on "Unification of Hindi Schools"; by Dr. N. P. Desai (President, South African Hindu Maha Sabha) on "Hindi as the Common Language of all Indians"; and by Pandit Nardev Vedalankar on "The History and Importance of Hindi Literature". Important resolutions on the above topics were passed. The conference concluded successfully. At present there are 17 schools affiliated to the Sangh. A uniform syllabus has been prepared and work is proceeding systematically.

Hindi Teachers' Classes. Hindi classes to increase the ability of Hindi teachers have been opened in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Pt. Nardev Vedalankar gives tuition in Durban and Pandit Jugmohan (Vidyaratan) in Pietermaritzburg. Both young men and women who attend these classes are prepared for examinations conducted by the Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti, Wardha, India.

For the first time, in December, 1948, 28 students wrote the "Pravesha" Examination. Certificates were presented to successful students from Maritzburg Centre by Mr. G. Bishoon on 7th August, 1949. Mr. M. Ramawtar did the presentation to the Durban students on 21st August, 1949, at a grand public function organised for the purpose.

The Sangh has begun to function properly and it is expected that under its guidance the cause of Hindi will be further advanced.

CHAPTER IX

Vedic Preachers of the Later Period

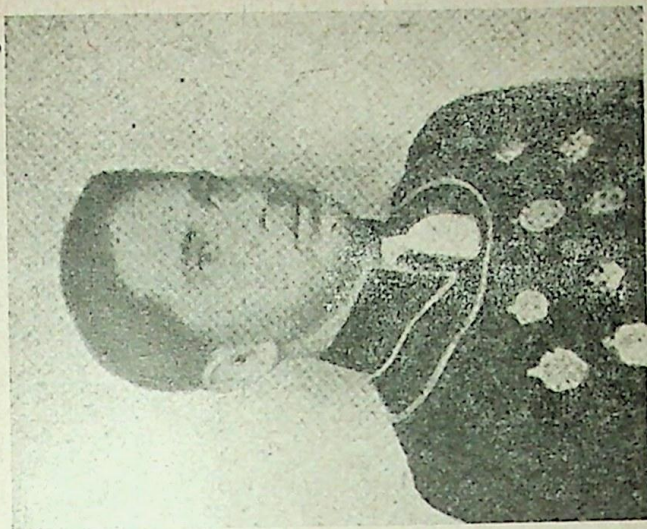
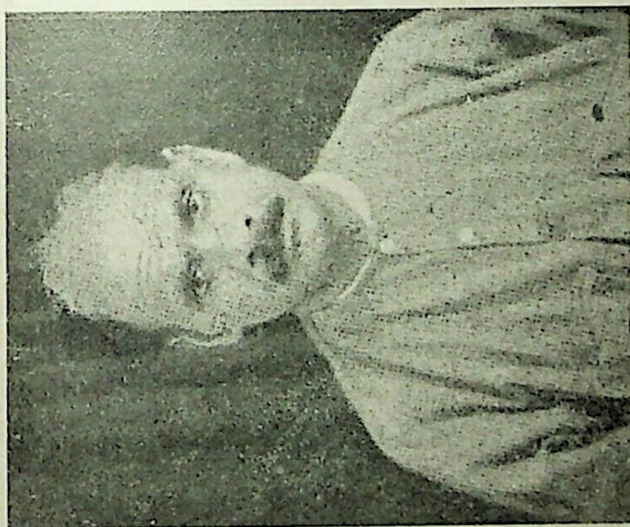
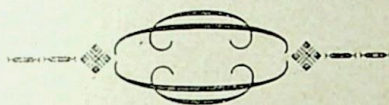
PROFESSOR RALARAM, M.A.:

Professor Ralaram, M.A., of D.A.V. College, Hoshiarpur, India, arived in this country in 1931 through the efforts of the late Mr. Mokamchand Varman and on the invitation of the Durban Central Arya Samaj, which was then not affiliated to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal). The support of the Pratinidhi Sabha was necessary to give the activities of the Panditji greater prominence, therefore, the Durban Central Arya Samaj affiliated to the Pratinidhi Sabha and with its guidance and co-operation planned out the programme of work for Panditji.

Panditji was a powerful speaker both in English and Hindi. He travelled from place to place and delivered excellent lectures on the principles of the Vedic religion at Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith, Dundee and other centres in Natal. He next toured Transvaal and Cape Province, where in most of the principal cities he addressed large gatherings. On 19th March, 1932, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha wanted to bid Panditji farewell at a public function on his departure to India, but due to certain difficulties this did not materialise.

THE LATE MR. MOKAMCHAND VARMAN:

Amongst the Aryans of South Africa the name of the late Mr. Varman will be long remembered. Mr. Varman was very much devoted to the Arya Samaj and he spared no pains at all times in disseminating its principles and ideals. Most of the preachers who came to this country were brought out by Mr. Varman at his own expense. He also played a very prominent part in collecting funds for the success of the various lecture tours. The credit of introducing Vedic literature in this country also goes to Mr. Varman.

In 1948 Mr. Varman went to India, where he breathed his last. Half of his estate has been bequeathed to the Hindu community for the advancement of Vedic knowledge and culture.

Vedic Missionary **MEHTA JAIMINI**

PROF. YASHPAL YOGI

DR. N. P. DESAI

President: S.A. Hindu Maha Sabha (1947-48)

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MR. MOKAMCHAND VARMAN

Who invited many Vedic Preachers to South Africa

PANDIT MEHTA JAIMINI: VEDIC MISSIONARY:

Pandit Mehta Jaimini, a distinguished Vedic missionary, stands amongst the foremost of the preachers who have widely travelled throughout the world and spread the Aryan principles. Before coming to South Africa Panditji had already visited Indonesia, Japan, America, West Indies, East Africa and Zanzibar and done commendable work in enlightening the Indians settled there on the culture and civilisation of India.

From East Africa he wanted to come to South Africa but the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was not able to invite him due to financial difficulties then obtaining. Nevertheless, Panditji landed in this country in 1934 through the efforts of Lala Mokamchand Varman.

On his arrival he began with his lecture work. His interesting and thought-provoking speeches on the influence of Vedic religion and culture in the different parts of the world drew large crowds. His wide and deep learning left behind an indelible impress on the minds of all those who came in contact with him. His wide travels had earned for him first hand information on the evidences substantiating the close connection of the civilisation of India with those of other countries. Old as he was, his memory was so strong that he hardly failed to quote profusely facts and figures from several books without the aid of any notes in support of the contention he held and the views he expounded. Mehtaji's lectures proved very popular. At the shortest possible notice, without awaiting any printed circulars, people flocked to hear his learned lectures. Under the auspices of practically all the local institutions he delivered inspiring addresses. The Hindu Maha Sabha organised a number of his lectures. In 1934 he performed the opening of the Conference convened by the S.A. Hindu Maha Sabha.

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha accorded Panditji a welcome reception. He did quite a lot in popularising Vedic literature. Prior to his arrival very few people here possessed copies of the Vedas. He had brought with him several copies of the Vedas and other literature which he disposed of to members of his audience.

THE INDIAN GIRL GUIDES OF ARYA KANYA MAHAVIDYALAYA BARODA, INDIA

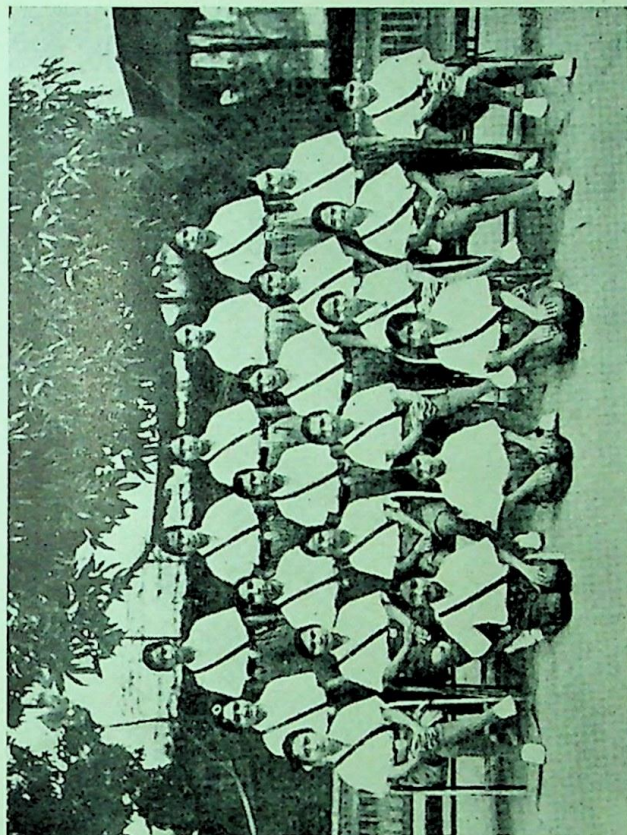
Under the care and guidance of the Principal, Pandit Anand Priyaji, the students of Arya Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Baroda, arrived in this country on 18th July, 1934, when they were warmly received at the Durban harbour. They were accommodated at the Surat Hindu Association Hall. A grand public reception was accorded them at the Victoria

Picture Palace under the auspices of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, which was also responsible for arranging their South African and Rhodesian itinerary and staging the various shows. The President of the Sabha, Mr. R. K. Kapitan, worked unceasingly in making satisfactory arrangements about their comfort, meals, accommodation and demonstrations. Two of their shows were staged in the Durban City Hall on 25th July and 6th August, 1934, when more than 3,000 men and women, amongst whom there was a fairly large number of Europeans, paid for their tickets and witnessed their display of physical culture, archery, etc., which were unprecedented in this country.

By special invitation two performances were given before the pupils of the Durban European Girls' High School. European women and girls were particularly struck with amazement at the performance of marvellous feats. The Headmistress of the High School spoke in eulogistic terms of the demonstrations given. On the departure of the Earl of Athlone, the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa, to England a special display by the Girl Guides was given. On all occasions very good impressions were created. Ten thousand people—considered to be a very large concourse of spectators then—witnessed a grand show held at Currie's Fountain, Durban, on 10th November, 1934.

Having won the admiration of all concerned, the Girl Guides left Durban for other parts of South Africa and Rhodesia. Special provision was made by the South African Railways for their Union tour, the fares being considerably reduced. Displays were given in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Bulawayo, Salisbury, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Newcastle, Ladysmith, Dannhauser, Glencoe, Pietermaritzburg, Stanger and at other centres. By the various shows that the Girl Guides staged throughout South Africa they were able to raise a sum of £5,000, which went to their Mahavidyalaya. Wherever the Guides went they gave a display of physical culture, sang national and religious songs and spread the teachings of the Vedic religion.

The Effect of their Visit: The Girl Guides left behind a lasting impress on the minds of the people of this country. Never before had the European as well as the Indian community witnessed the performance of such feats. The excellent displays of items, such as Indian club swinging, feats of yoga asans, archery, garba-dance, dagger drill, dagger fight, sword fight, double sticks play, sword and shield and staves fight, held large audiences spell-bound and captivated their hearts. Forceful and impressive speeches by the captain and other leaders of the Guides astonished all those that heard them. It was beyond one's conception to see Indian girls and women who are known all the world over for their

GIRL GUIDES OF THE ARYA KANYA
MAHAVIDYALAYA, BARODA, INDIA

Founder of Gandhi-Tagore Lectureship Trust

PANDIT RISHIRAM, B.A.

seclusion and purdah system attired in almost military uniform.

The Guides exerted tremendous influence in enhancing the prestige of Indian womanhood in this country. The attitude of the Europeans towards the Indians changed for the better. Wherever the Guides went they were warmly and cordially welcomed. A number of tea and dinner parties were arranged in their honour. Even the Agent-General for the Government of India in South Africa, Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh, invited them to a special party. Practically all their displays were staged under the patronage of the mayors of the towns they visited.

On 11th November, 1934, they left the shores of South Africa after a successful tour.

YOGI PROFESSOR YASHPAL'S ARRIVAL:

Professor Yashpal arrived in this country in June, 1937. His demonstrations of the feats in archery and Yogaism were also organised by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal). They accorded him a public welcome on 10th June, 1937. At first he gave a preview of his ability in the mastery of archery—the ancient art of India—and Yoga, the puzzle of the West before a few selected Indians and Europeans, among whom were the Chief Magistrate and the Mayor of Durban. For nearly two hours he allowed himself to be buried alive at the Currie's Fountain, Durban. His successful performance of the marvellous feats in archery and Yoga mystified huge crowds. He was the first in this country to demonstrate the powers of a Yogi.

His feats in archery progressed from the apparently impossible to the absolutely incredible. They included five arrows, five marks; two simultaneous shots in opposite directions; blindfold sighting by sound and by touch.

The Yogi gave performances in Pietermaritzburg, Glencoe, Verulam, Ladysmith, Dannhauser and Johannesburg, and thereby demonstrated the potentialities of Yoga, Pranayam, Samadhi and Danur Vidya (archery). The Professor carried also the torch of Vedic Dharma and Aryan Culture wherever he went. He left for India on 28th October, 1937, after a farewell meeting was arranged in his honour.

PANDIT RISHIRAM, B.A.:

To spread the teachings of Vedic Religion, Pandit Rishiram had gone to England in 1937. Through the instrumentality of Mr. M. C. Varman and other Aryans he was invited to visit this country on a lecture tour by the South African Hindu Maha Sabha. His lectures were held at various centres. Panditji was a good exponent of the teachings of the Vedas, Upanishadas and Gita. He was

fully conversant with the works and thought of Gandhi and Tagore, and Radhakrishnan and Arvindo Gosh. His angle of vision was very broad and, therefore, was able to impress even the Europeans with his expositions of the thought, philosophy and culture of the Indians. For some time Panditji conducted classes in the study of Gita and Upanishadas. He delivered a number of lectures to the Theosophical Society in Durban. Panditji's "high-standard" speeches attracted the youths of the country to him. Several students—both European and Indian—had profitable discussions on religious themes with the Panditji.

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal) accorded Panditji a public welcome on 8th August, 1937.

Gandhi-Tagore Lectureship Trust: Pandit Rishiram conceived of a wonderful machinery whereby the Indian community of South Africa can receive the services of preachers from India who can come out regularly to this country. He launched on the project during his first visit. The embryo was nurtured further by him when he returned to this country in 1945. He collected a sum of £6,000 and established a trust known as the Gandhi-Tagore Lectureship Trust to administer the funds. The accumulated amount earns annually an interest of £350, which is to be utilised in inviting a learned preacher from India every year. All the travelling expenses of the visiting lecturer are to be borne by the Trust and an honorarium of £150 is to be paid to him on his departure to India. A scheme such as this obviates the need for collections and the difficulties attached thereto. Pandit Rishiram came to this country in 1945 as the first lecturer under the management of the Gandhi-Tagore Lectureship Trust. The first seven preachers to be brought out by this Trust require the sanction and approval of Pandit Rishiram. Thereafter the seven preachers would constitute a board which would then be responsible for the selection of further preachers.

When Pandit Rishiram returned to this country he was welcomed by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha at a public meeting on 28th June, 1945. Welcome receptions were held in his honour at various places.

A series of 8 lectures, reaching a very high level, on the Nature and Destiny of Man were delivered by Panditji at the M. K. Gandhi and Parsi Rustomjee Hall, Durban. His inspiring addresses drew large crowds. Members of different racial groups presided over his lectures on different occasions. These lectures made people conscious of the ray of spirituality inherent in each individual.

In addition to the series of lectures, the Panditji delivered illuminating addresses at welcome meetings arranged

by the following societies: Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal); Sanatan Dharma Sabha (Natal); Arya Yuvuk Sabha; Surat Hindu Association; Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj; Prarthna Mundal; Theosophical Society; South African Andhra Maha Sabha; Yuvuk Arya Samaj, Clairwood; Sydenham Sanatan Dharma Sabha, McCord Zulu Hospital and the Natal University College Vacation School at Adam's College, Amanzimtoti.

The people of Verulam, Tongaat, Chaka's Kraal, Stanger, Pietermaritzburg and its suburbs, Ladysmith, Newcastle, Dundee, Dannhauser and other places also had the opportunity of listening to him in their respective centres.

From Natal Panditji proceeded to Transvaal, where he delivered a number of lectures, mainly in Johannesburg and Pretoria. The Europeans of Pretoria took keen interest in his lectures. The members of the local Theosophical Society were also addressed by the Panditji.

On leaving Transvaal he continued with his missionary work in the Cape Province at Kimberley, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London. He was welcomed by the Mayors of these towns—at public receptions and banquets arranged in his honour.

From South Africa Panditji proceeded to Portuguese East Africa. A number of lectures were delivered in Lourenco Marques.

By his lofty religious and philosophical discourses Panditji created a stir not only in the Hindu world but got the entire Indian community thinking especially of the cultural heritage that is theirs. During the few months that he stayed here he succeeded in infusing new spirit into the community.

Panditji exhorted his people to live in friendship, cordiality and amity with the aboriginal African races. He pleaded for a sympathetic understanding of their aspirations. Equality of treatment backed by justice and fair play was to characterise the relationship between the Indo-African groups. As a practical demonstration of his honesty of purpose he collected a sum of £600 from the Indian community and distributed £100 each to six African institutions.

Panditji carried the message of India and the Vedas to Indians and others settled in Portuguese East Africa, Zanzibar, West Indies, America, Canada and other parts of the world. His untiring services as a Vedic Missionary are invaluable.

PANDIT NARDEV VEDALANKAR:

Pandit Nardev Vedalankar has been brought out to this country as a Gujerati teacher by the Surat Hindu Educa-

tional Society. He arrived in this country on 24th November, 1947. He is a graduate of Gurukul Kangri, India, and although the primary purpose of his coming out to this country is to teach Gujerati other communities are taking full advantage of his religious and cultural knowledge. All the preachers who came to this country remained here for only a short period, but Pandit Nardevji is expected to stay here for five or six years, and, therefore, he has better opportunities to give stability to his work.

The tenets of Vedic religion are being spread by the Panditji from time to time at different places. The different local institutions never fail to invite him to address them on the significance of Deepavali, Birth of Lord Rama, Birth of Lord Krishna, etc., when such occasions arise. The performance of Sanskars (ceremonies) and the recital of the Upanishada Katha have also been undertaken by the Panditji.

The most outstanding work of Panditji is in the field of Hindi education. It was through his instrumentality that the Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal) was given birth at a conference organised by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Pandit Nardevji is the President of the Sangh.

Taking advantage of the long period of his stay in this country the Panditji has instituted a Hindi Teachers' Training Class to raise the efficiency of the Hindi teachers. Before his advent such a class did not exist. Through the efforts of Panditji not only in South Africa but in the entire continent of Africa the study of Hindi is being fostered. Ten or twelve centres of Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti, Wardha, India, have already been established in Africa.

On the occasion of Deepavali Festival in 1949 Panditji performed the Yajur Veda Parayan Maha Yag arranged by Surat Hindu Association. He was assisted by Maharaj Kesho Ram Trivedi. Such a Maha Yag was performed for the first time in South Africa. In the Association Hall there is also performed every week a Havan ceremony on a large scale by the Panditji. A method has been evolved by the Panditji whereby the Gujeratis take a vow to abstain themselves from taking intoxicating drinks. It is his earnest desire to give greater publicity to his scheme amongst the entire Gujerati community.

A series of lessons on Hindu Dharma, Aryan culture and Indian nationality suitable for children are being edited by the Panditji. Two parts of the work have already been printed and published in Gujerati. The Hindi version is under print. The lessons are very well graded to meet the requirements of the different standards. Panditji's books on religious instruction have already been included in

the Gujerati vernacular syllabus in South Africa, East Africa, Portuguese East Africa, Rhodesia, Arabia and other places.

The book in Hindi, "Rashtra Bhasha ka Saral Vyakaran" (Simple Grammar of the Indian National Language) edited by Pandit Nardevji and published by Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti, Wardha, India, is proving very useful to Hindi students.

PANDIT GANGA PRASAD UPADHYAYA, M.A.:

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal) has invited Pandit Ganga Prasadji to this country to participate in its Silver Jubilee Celebrations, to be held in Durban from 15th to 26th February. Pandit Ganga Prasadji arrived in this country on 30th December, 1949. This is the first time that an official of the International Aryan League has visited this country. He is the General Secretary of this central organisation and an outstanding leader of the Arya Samaj. He is a person of wide knowledge and deep learning. He is an author of repute of well over 25 books in Hindi and English on Vedic religion and other allied subjects.

On 2nd January, 1950, a grand public welcome was accorded to Panditji by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha at the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj Hall. Other societies have also come forward in arranging welcome receptions in honour of Panditji. Already a series of 6 lectures on the culture, philosophy and religious teachings of India have been delivered with great ability. Hundreds of people have rolled up to listen to his inspiring addresses which by their universal nature have become very popular. It is hoped that Panditji's presence alone will contribute to a large measure towards the success of the forthcoming Silver Jubilee Celebrations.

Through the arrival of Panditji new spirit has been infused not only among the Arya Samajists but the whole Hindu community has been awakened. It is evident that Panditji's dynamic personality will leave behind a lasting impression. The Panditji has completed a catechism (questionnaire) on the essential teachings of Hinduism which will be soon published in the form of a tract.

Dr. N. P. Desai:

Pandit Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya is the guest of Dr. and Mrs. N. P. Desai, of "Santiniketan", Ninth Avenue, Durban, who have so willingly come to the assistance of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal). Their warm hand of hospitality to a Vedic preacher was extended also on a previous occasion. During his second visit Pandit Rishiram found his accommodation at the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Desai. Dr. Desai is one of the bright jewels of Mahatma

Gandhi's family. He has laboured at a great sacrifice in keeping Hindu religion and culture alive in this country. The credit of enhancing the prestige and status of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha, undoubtedly, goes to the Doctor. He served as the Chairman of the Council of the Maha Sabha in 1945 and 1946. He was elected to the exalted post of the President of the S.A. Hindu Maha Sabha in 1946. This post he held for two years. During his term of office as an important official he gave of his best towards the advancement of his people in the religious, social and cultural fields.

He toiled hard to collect funds for the purchase of the Maha Sabha's property in Lorne Street, where the proposed Swami Shankeranandji Memorial Hall is to be erected. He formed Seva Samitis at various places to assist poor and indigent Hindus on behalf of the Maha Sabha. Monthly assistance was granted to these destitute families. By doing charitable work Dr. Desai, as the head of the Maha Sabha, prevented the conversion of Hindus to other faiths.

With the assistance of Pandit Risharam he compiled a uniform prayer for all Hindus. Similarly, acting in co-operation with Pandit Nardev Vedalankar he published a compilation of a number of mantras suitable as a prayer during the Antheyeshti Sanskar (cremation). Both of these prayers have been popularised throughout the continent of Africa. The different sections of the Hindu community have firm faith and confidence in Dr. Desai because of his religious and cultural outlook being beyond sectionalism. The Hindu Maha Sabha of South Africa does not participate in politics; its field of work is confined to matters religious, social and cultural.

The Preachers in the Transvaal

The Indian population of Transvaal and Cape Province is comparatively much smaller than that in Natal where there is a greater concentration, therefore, Natal is used as the main centre for Vedic missionary work. Still, practically all preachers from India have also visited Transvaal and Cape Province.

A few preachers confined their services to only Transvaal. The following are some of the principal ones.

PANDIT HARISHANKER VIDYARTI:

Pandit Harishanker was the first one to do some concrete work over a long period. He hailed from the province of Gujerat and was the editor of " Arya Prakash ", a weekly

newspaper owned by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Bombay. He travelled from place to place in Transvaal and created a love for Vedic religion particularly among the Gujeratis. When he came to Durban he was given a public reception by Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. His lectures were as enjoyable as interesting to his audience. He did much work in the direction of fostering his mother-tongue—the Gujerati language. He also went to Rhodesia on a lecture tour.

THE LATE PANDIT SUDHIR KUMAR VIDYALANKAR:

The Transvaal United Patidhar Society of Johannesburg had invited Pandit Sudhir Kumarji to teach in the Gujerati School of the city. Pandit Sudhir Kumar was a graduate of Gurukul Kangri. He commanded great respect in Transvaal and exerted great influence on his compatriots. He popularised the Vedic rite of performing weddings, Sandhya and Havan. He was contemplating to establish "Dayanand Vedic Mission" to propagate the teachings of the Arya Samaj, but due to his untimely death his dream remained unrealised.

MR. VINAY CHANDRA PATEL:

Mr. Patel opened a school of physical culture in Johannesburg and did commendable work.

MR. HARICHANDRA ARYA:

He is the son of Mr. Nathubhai, a resident of Johannesburg. He has returned to Transvaal after having studied at Gurukul Supa. He is a very enthusiastic worker and is making efforts to encourage the performance of Vedic Sanskars. He is also interested in the furtherance of Hindi, for which purpose he has instituted a class. Students have already been prepared for examinations conducted by the Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti, Wardha. The certificates to successful students were recently presented by Mr. R. T. Chari, the Secretary to the Indian High Commissioner.

MR. VASANTRAI PAREKH has also arrived in Transvaal from Gurukul Supa. Vedic sanskars are performed in Pretoria by **MR. CHHOTUBHAI MEHTA.** The people of Cape Town are receiving the services of Mr. Ramchandra "Kovidh" who also hails from Gurukul Supa. These men are using their influence to advance the teachings of Vedic Dharma in Cape Town and Transvaal.

Other Preachers and Lecturers

PANDIT RAVISHANKER VIDYALANKAR:

The ideals of the Arya Samaj have been well disseminated in Portuguese East Africa through the efforts of

Swami Bhawani Dayal. Most of the Indian residents there are Gujerati merchants and traders. In 1932 they established a society known as "Bharat Samaj" which completed the erection of their Veda Mandir (Vedic Temple) in 1937. Pandit Ravishanker Vidyalankar, a graduate of Gurukul Kangri, arrived there on the invitation of the Bharat Samaj to teach Gujerati and Hindi in 1944. Pandit Suman Kumar Vidyalanker has joined Ravishankerji recently.

Pandit Ravishanker was welcomed at a public meeting by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. He has delivered a number of interesting lectures in Durban as well as in Johannesburg.

SHRIMATI RAMPYAREE DEVI AND KUMARI NARAYANI DEVI:

To collect funds for the Jalandhar Maha Vidyalaya, India, Shrimati Rampyaree Devi and Kumari Narayani Devi arrived in this country in 1933. They were also publicly welcomed by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha.

THE MISSIONARIES OF RAMA KRISHNA MISSION:

Swami Adhyanandji, an erudite Sanskrit scholar and an excellent orator, arrived in this country in 1934 as a preacher of the Rama Krishna Mission. He delivered a series of lectures in Johannesburg, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and at other centres, on the philosophy of the East. The English language which he spoke sometimes proved to be beyond the reach of the ordinary student of religion. His inspiring discourses attracted a large number of Europeans who were very much impressed with his outstanding ability. He delivered a number of lectures on Indian culture, ethics and philosophy to the students of the Witwatersrand University.

Swami Ghananand was another preacher who represented the Rama Krishna Mission. He also was a learned person and a fine speaker in the English language. At Sea View he established a branch of the Mission he represented. A series of lectures on the teachings of Vedanta and Upanishadas were also given by him at various places. His attitude towards the Arya Samaj appeared to be somewhat hostile. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha made endeavours to give him a welcome reception but he did not accept the invitation.

SHRIMATI SAROJINI NAIDOO:

As a representative of the Indian National Congress Mrs. Sarojini Naidoo landed in this country in 1924 to study

the conditions of Indians obtaining here at the time. She also raised the status of the Indians in the estimation of the Europeans by her powerful speeches on the culture and civilisation of India. Indian womenfolk in particular benefited immensely by her presence in this country. Their advance in the social and educational sphere is due considerably to the efforts of Mrs. Sarojini Naidoo.

THE RT. HON. SHRINIVASA SASTRI:

Mr. Sastri was the first Agent-General of the Government of India in South Africa. He arrived in this country in 1927. His services in respect of raising the social and educational standards of the Indians of this country are immeasurable. In the English language he was an orator par excellence. His inspiring and magnetic personality captivated the hearts of many Europeans. The Sastri College which bears his name and where education is given to the matriculation standard is his creation—a fruit of his untiring labours.

SIR SARVAPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN:

On the invitation of Sir Rama Rau, the Indian High Commissioner, Sir Radhakrishnan arrived in this country in 1938. The name of Radhakrishnan is world-famous as one of the greatest exponents of Indian philosophy. Radhakrishnan did not remain here too long, but his few speeches were enough to create a lasting impression. His intellectual genius is simply marvellous.

The last three great personages were, indeed, mighty representatives of Indian culture. Their visits and services to this country were, undoubtedly, a great boon to both Europeans and Indians.

CHAPTER X

Arya Yuvuk Sabha (Durban) and Aryan Benevolent Home

Establishment. Mr. D. G. Satyadeva used to teach Hindi at night to a number of young men at his residence. With the assistance and co-operation of his students he established a society named "Arya Bal Mitra Mandal" on 19th April, 1912. Later Swami Shankeranandji changed this name to "Arya Yuvuk Sabha".

Activities. At first Swami Shankeranandji taught the young men the correct method of reciting the Sandhya and performing the Havan Ceremony. Pandit Nayanarajh made a start accordingly and conducted weekly services every Thursday. These weekly services were held for a number of years at Mayavant Hall, Tamil Institute and Patel's Hall. At present they are regularly held at the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Hall in Carlisle Street.

In 1921 it was the Arya Yuvuk Sabha that brought out Pandit Ishwardutt Vidyalankar, a graduate of Gurukul Kangri, India, from Transvaal to Natal, where, under its auspices, the Panditji delivered a number of lectures on religious and social matters. The credit of initiating many activities in the religious field also goes to the Arya Yuvuk Sabha. It was the Arya Yuvuk Sabha that convened an Aryan Conference on 10th November, 1924, to consider the advisability of celebrating Rishi Dayanand's Birth Centenary. At this conference a Centenary Celebration Committee was formed. The Sabha has been constantly active and alive since its inception to the present day.

Conversion (Shuddhi). The Sabha has been instrumental in converting the most number of non-Hindus into Hinduism. It has persistently laboured to bring back into its fold those who have strayed away. On receipt of information the Sabha has acted promptly in taking effective steps to prevent Hindus, ignorant of their religion, from embracing Christianity or Islam. In 1917 an attempt was made to convert Mr. Jung Bahadur Singh, D.C.M., an Indian officer in the First World War, into Christianity in a church. A number of young men in the company of Mr. Satyadeva entered the church and threw an open challenge to the Christian priest, who declined to debate the issue. Mr. Jung Bahadur Singh was next brought away from the church without being converted, and he lived a Hindu right up to his death. During the same year one Parasaraman was saved from being proselytised. Thirty members of the Sabha were arrested and fined for taking this action. Parasaraman remained a Hindu all his life.

School. A number of persons used to conduct an English school on the premises of the late Mr. B. M. Singh, who decided to close down the school due to unsatisfactory arrangements. The Sabha, therefore, took control of the school under its own jurisdiction on 1st August, 1928, and began to run it on its own premises. The number of children went on increasing daily to such an extent that additions to the school building have had to be made three times. Still there is an acute shortage of accommodation. The school is run as a Government-Aided Indian School. English is taught to children according to the Education

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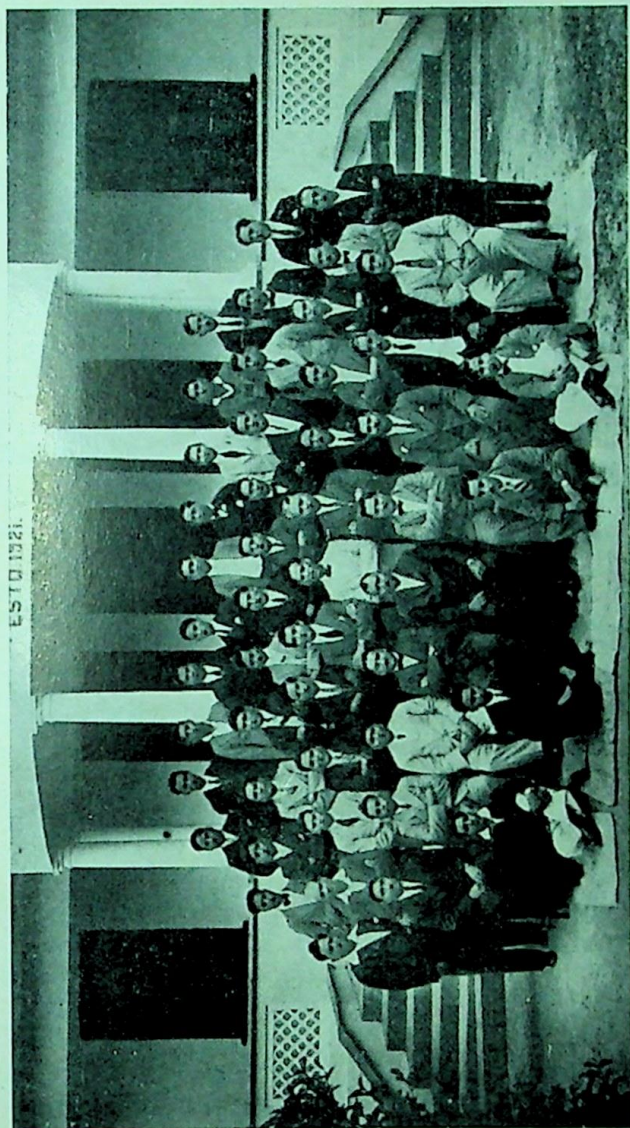
OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS — 1932

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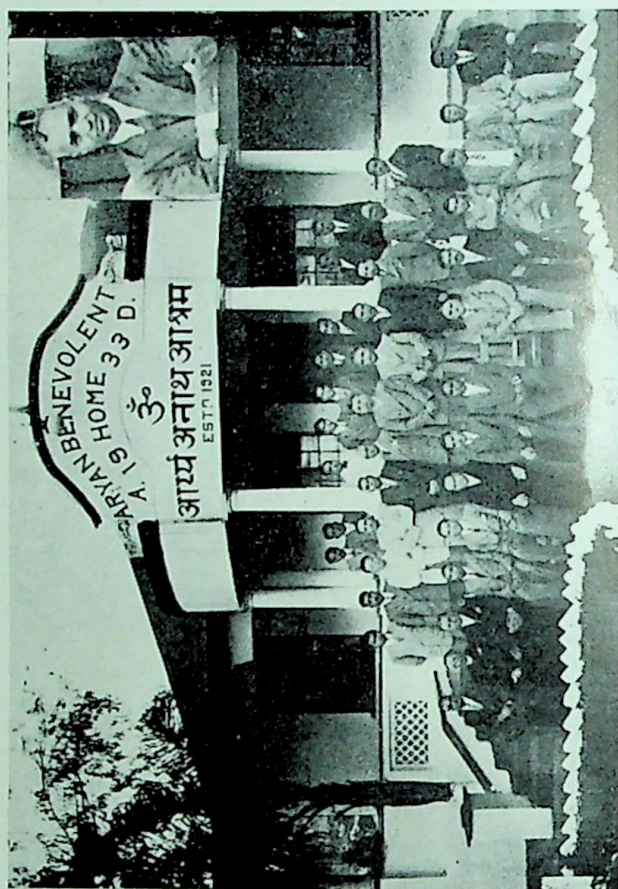
OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS — 1946

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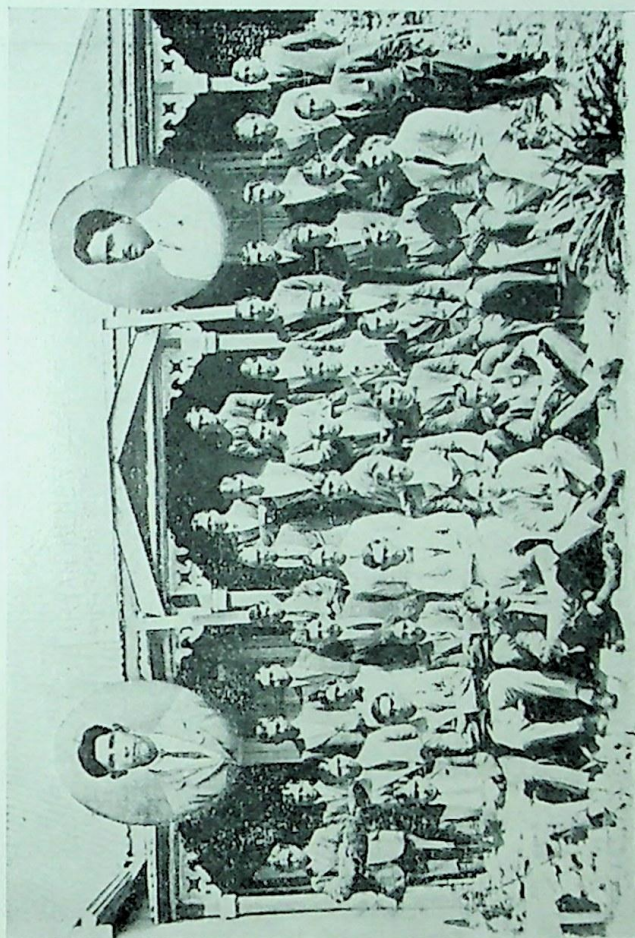

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS — 1921

ARYAN BENEVOLENT HOME — DURBAN

EARLY STAGES OF THE HOME

Department's syllabus and curriculum. Instructions in the vernaculars in Hindi and Tamil are given in the afternoons. The late Mr. B. M. Singh was the School Manager and after his death the late Mr. B. S. Singh. The present grantee is Mr. S. L. Singh and Mr. S. Rughoobeer the Hindi teacher.

Officials and Supporters. The present officials are Mr. B. Govind (Chairman), Mr. R. Shishupal (Hon. Secretary), and Mr. R. Sewpersad (Hon. Treasurer). Mr. D. G. Satyadeva served as President of the Sabha for 29 years since the inception and it was during his term of office that the Sabha made such great advance. His younger brother, the late Mr. S. D. Shanker, who was an enthusiastic worker and a good speaker, was the Secretary of the Sabha for a number of years. The Sabha and the Arya Samajic world sustained a great loss in his death. The late Mr. Ramklaas, who was President of the Sabha for three years, also rendered creditable service. Similarly, Messrs. S. L. Singh and R. C. Singh, Pt. V. C. Nayanarajh and the late Mr. B. Bhagwan have been pillars of great strength to the Sabha.

ARYAN BENEVOLENT HOME, DURBAN

The most outstanding function of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha has been the administration of the Aryan Benevolent Home, of which not only the Arya Samajists but the entire Hindu community is proud. The Home is an institution without a parallel in South Africa for the protection and maintenance of Indian orphans.

Inception. On a certain night in 1918 the President of the Sabha, Mr. D. G. Satyadeva, witnessed a pathetic incident. He saw an African constable hit and chase an old Indian beggar who had slept away by the roadside. The poor beggar had no home where he could take shelter. He ran into a public latrine and slept the whole night there. This event had a very profound effect on Mr. Satyadeva. He resolved then and there to do something to alleviate the sufferings and humiliations of the aged and infirm. Through his influence the Sabha adopted a resolution at its meeting of 7th July, 1918, to establish a benevolent home.

The decision to found a home had been taken but the Sabha had no finance to launch on the project so they resolved to write and produce dramas and plays to raise funds. Many plays written by the Sabha's talented teacher, Mr. N. Lal Bahadur, were staged. The acting was done by members of the Sabha. These plays became very popular, earning praise from all sides. The proceeds from the plays were utilised in purchasing a property with a building which was converted into a benevolent home, the opening of which was done by Pt. Bhawani Dayal. For 19 months after the formal opening the Home was under the wise management

of Mr. Satya Bhooshen, who gave his services without any charge.

Extension to the Ashram. The work at the Ashram gradually increased in magnitude. The Ashram began to enjoy the confidence of the Hindu community and others. Only after three years' existence, through the efforts of Mr. H. Robinson, the Ashram began to receive a Government grant. At first only very old persons who had no supporters were accepted as inmates. Subsequently, requests were made for the acceptance of orphan children. The first lot of orphans were admitted into the Home on 7th October, 1926, and ever since then to the present day children from various parts of South Africa have been sent to this orphanage.

As the number of inmates steadily increased, the need for extensions to the home became greater. Separate wards were made for indigent men, women, boys and girls. The foundation stone of the new Home was laid by the late Mr. B. M. Singh—a great friend and supporter of the Ashram. When completed it was opened by Sir Kurma Reddi, the Agent-General of the Government of India in South Africa. In spite of these extensions the need for more accommodation continued to exist. Two further additions were made—one in 1933, when Mr. H. Robinson, the Protector of Indian Immigrants, did the official opening, and the other in 1943, when the opening ceremony was performed by His Honour the Administrator of Natal, Mr. Heaton Nichols.

Management of the Home. The administration of the Home is done by a Standing Committee of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha. Each inmate is given a separate bed. A caretaker and a matron, who reside on the premises, are at the service of the inmates night and day. Meals are served to the inmates three times a day. Clothing is also provided. Suitable arrangements have been made for medical attention. Patients are visited by doctors when necessary. The education of the children both in English and the vernaculars is not neglected, as specially for this purpose the Sabha runs a school. Visitors to the Ashram have spoken in glowing terms of the manner in which the Home is managed. Amongst such visitors have been Agents-Generals from India, officials from Central Union Government, Provincial Administration and the Municipality, and missionaries and preachers from India. Special attention is given to the hygienic preparation of meals and general cleanliness with which practically all the visitors have been well impressed.

In connection with the administration of the Home a few opinions are given hereunder:—

ARYAN BENEVOLENT HOME — DURBAN

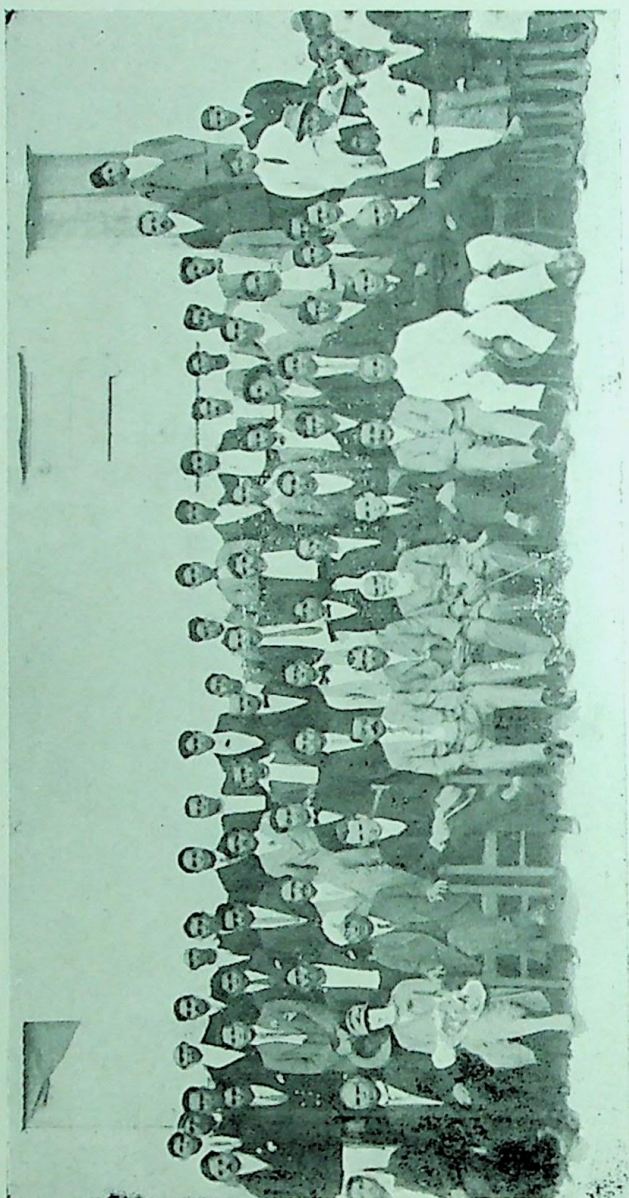
DELINQUENTS SENT BY UNION GOVT. — 1945 (SOCIAL WELFARE DEPART.)

ARYAN BENEVOLENT HOME — DURBAN

MALE AND FEMALE INMATES — 1946

ARYAN BENEVOLENT HOME — DURBAN

INMATES — 1947

ARYA YUVUK SABHA — DURBAN

GUESTS AND MEMBERS AT ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION — 1932

Mrs. Sarojini Naidoo (Ambassador of Indian National Congress):

"We have come and seen the place is very neat and clean. Thank you."

Visited 24th May, 1924.

The Rt. Hon. Field Marshal J. C. Smuts (the former Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa):

"From very small beginnings, and in spite of financial difficulties, you have succeeded in establishing an institution that is now widely known throughout Natal for its good work and has received official recognition. Such an achievement in a short space of time deserves congratulations, and I wish you every success in the future."

Prime Minister's Office, Cape Town, 24th April, 1946.

Councillor Senator the Hon. S. J. Smith (The Mayor of Durban):

"The caring for destitute children and orphans of Indians and the aged from all Provinces of South Africa, for along period without any distinction of creed, is one which the Committee can be proud of, and worthy of the admiration of the European community. The Provincial Administration and the Municipality, which give small grants to the Home, recognise the need that exists for such an institution, and the Union Government has aided the Home through the payment of maintenance grants for those who have been committed to the institution. This is the only non-European institution of its kind approved by the Union Government and I am glad to acknowledge, on behalf of the City of Durban, the work which it is performing. The Mayoress and I wish the Aryan Benevolent Home the best of luck."

The Mayor's Parlour, Durban, 10th April, 1946.

Pandit Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya, M.A. (Eminent Vedic Missionary and General Secretary of International Aryan League, India):

"A unique Aryan institution, a marvellous work of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha, a specimen of Arya Samajic philanthropic activities. May God bless the Home and those to whom the Home owes its success."

Visited 6th January, 1950.

The Importance of the Ashram. The Ashram has steadily risen in significance. Satisfied with the general upkeep and management of the Ashram, the Union Government has decided to send to the Home delinquent children

for reformation. The Social Welfare Department gives a subsidy of 25 shillings per child to the Ashram.

In order to meet the ever-increasing demand for accommodation the Sabha has recently purchased 17½ acres of land at Cato Manor for a sum of £7,250, of which £6,000 has still to be liquidated. The officials of the Sabha are making every endeavour to redeem the property of its debt. It is proposed to erect there new wards on modern lines for the orphans. Facilities will also be provided for instruction in various handicrafts.

A table of the inmates admitted since the inception of the Sabha to the present day is given hereunder:—

Inmates	Admitted	Released	Deaths
Male adults	684	487	165
Female adults	378	277	84
Boys	303	254	3
Girls	245	205	3
Total	1610	1223	255

The Home commenced with 4 inmates. From the inception to the present day 1,610 inmates—Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others—have found shelter in the Ashram. Ever since 1921 the number of children who have died in the Ashram is only 6. This speaks well of the good administration of the Home. Both boys and girls are kept in the Ashram only till 18 years of age. Remedial measures are applied to reform all delinquents admitted to the Home. They are given the necesary education. When they have satisfactorily served their terms of probation they are sent back to their parents or guardians or relatives. Attempts are made to find employment for grown-up boys about to be discharged from the Ashram. A very striking example of the product of the Ashram is Mr. R. Shishupal, who was admitted as an orphan. From early childhood he showed signs of great promise. He has made great advance educationally and to-day he is employed as a teacher in a Government-Aided Indian School. Not only this, he has considered his duty to serve in return the Ashram which had provided him shelter. He holds at the moment the important post of the Secretary of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha under whose management the Ashram is run.

When the girls (inmates) reach a marriageable age the Sabha shoulders full responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for their marriage. Equipped with the education and training that they have received in the Ashram they have made and are making a success of their

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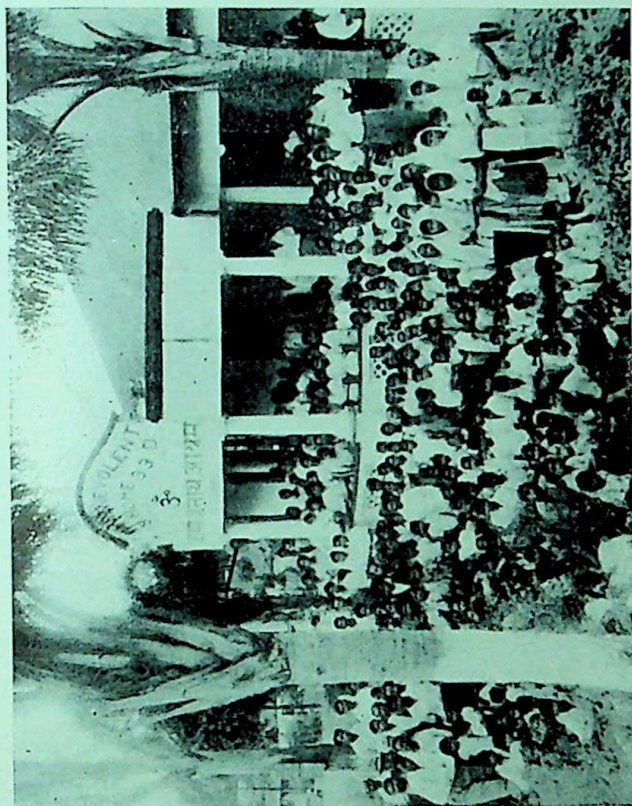

REFUGEES OF THE INDO-AFRICAN RIOTS (JAN. 1949)

ARYAN BENEVOLENT HOME — DURBAN

REFUGEES OF THE INDO-AFRICAN RIOTS PREPARING THEIR MEALS (JAN. 1949)

married lives. Old men and women are taken back by their sons and daughters, or relatives, on the improvement of their financial position, otherwise they remain in the Ashram peacefully till death.

Donors and Benefactors. Substantial service has been rendered to the Indian community by the Ashram for the last 30 years; consequently, it has become very popular and widely known. Most of the requirements are provided by the members of the Indian community. Without any religious or racial prejudice Hindus, Muslims and Christians, Europeans and Non-Europeans have supported the Ashram financially and otherwise. Financial assistance is also received from the Union Government, Provincial Administration, Durban Municipality and other institutions. Farmers and shopkeepers have helped with their contributions of vegetables and fruit, groceries and clothing. A number of individuals send either daily or weekly a number of sundry goods.

The following institutions make regular annual contributions to the Ashram:—

Amounts Received During 1949	**£**
Social Welfare Department: Union Government (£1 10s. 0d. per child per mensum)	1,220
University of Natal Rag	300
Natal Provincial Administration Grant	100
Durban Municipality	50
Durban Turf Club	50
Clairwood Turf Club	50

The names of the principal donors are as follows:—

Mr. B. Sookdeo Singh £250; Durban Public House Trust £250; Mr. Rustomji Trust £125; Sir C. G. Smith, Messrs. Duphelia and Sons, Messrs. C. N. Rana and Sons, Messrs. Samjee Devshi and Sons, Mr. B. M. Patel, N. Naran Charity Trust, Derby Shirt Manufacturers, Messrs. P. Hargovan and Sons, Lockhat Charity Trust, Kapitan Charity Trust, Mesrs. Premier Produce Co., Mr. M. L. Sultan, Mr. V. N. Naik, £105 each; The Commercial Produce Supply Co., Mr. T. N. Bhoola, M. S. Randeree Charitable Trust, Messrs. Dayal Khoosal and Sons, Victoria Produce Co., £52 10s. 0d. each; Mr. E. G. Paruk family, Mr. H. M. Bhoola, £26 5s. 0d. each; Mr. B. Gangaram £25.

There have been many donors of amounts less than £25.

Supporters and Well-wishers. Invaluable services have been rendered by a number of well-wishers. The name of Mr. B. M. Patel is worthy of special mention. Very keen interest is taken by him in the general welfare and progress

of the Ashram ever since its inception. He has given ungrudging co-operation in collecting funds, purchasing the property and in erecting extensions. Through the influence of Mr. Patel the Sabha has been able to get an overdraft from the bank. In recognition of his outstanding service the Sabha has elected him as one of its patrons. The Ashram places a lot of its hope in Mr. Patel. Similarly the Indian leader, Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee—a Parsi—has rendered great service to the Ashram by lending his influence and hand of co-operation in collecting funds. Mr. Sorabjee is a true friend and supporter of the Ashram.

In addition to Mr. Patel and Mr. Rustomjee there are so many persons who have helped the Ashram that it is almost impossible to give a list of them, but still the names of those who have, ever since the inception, made great sacrifices for the welfare of the Ashram and on whose strength the Ashram exists have to be mentioned, and they are Mesrs. D. G. Satyadeva, S. L. Singh, Pt. V. C. Nayanarajh, D. Ganourie, A. Daleepsingh, N. Lalbahadur, K. Ramsaroop and B. Govind.

Dr. M. K. Mistry and Dr. M. G. Naidoo, well-known medical practitioners in Durban, visit the Ashram and render medical aid free of charge.

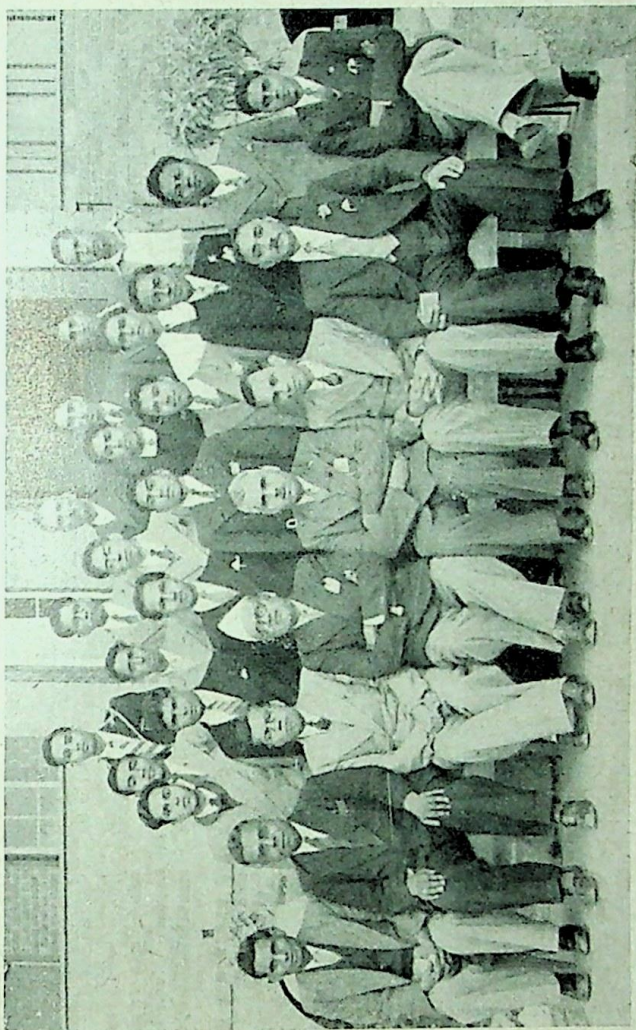
CHAPTER XI

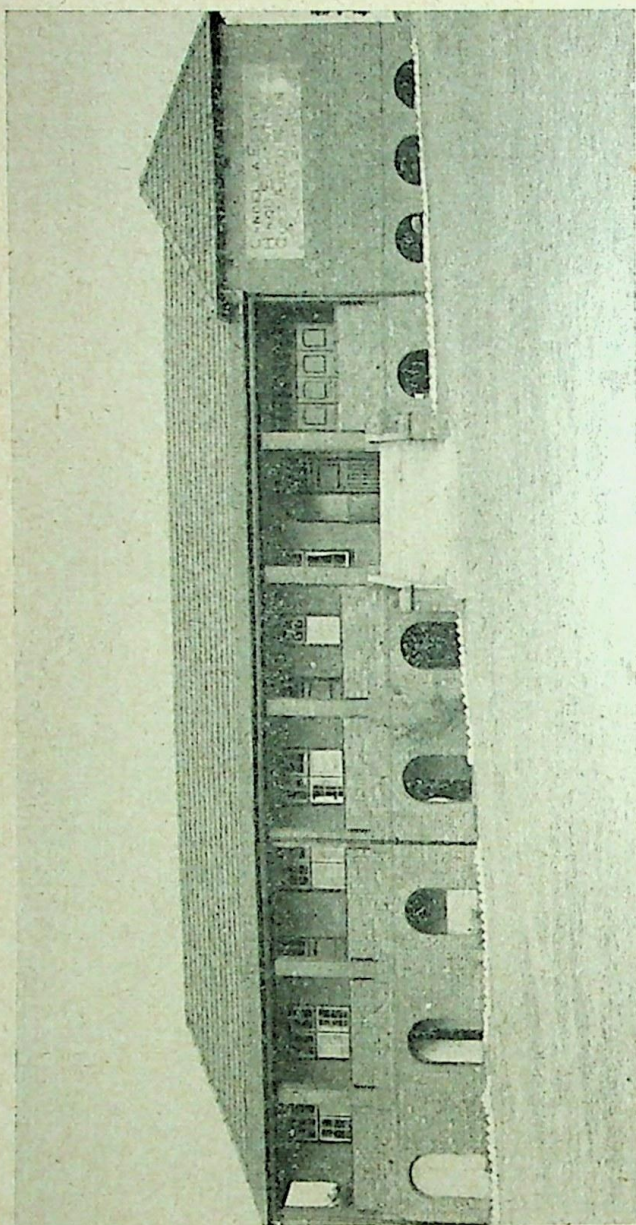
Vedic Institutions of Durban

CANDELLA ESTATE HINDU SANGATAN

Inception. With the aims and objects of fostering Hindi and the tenets of Hinduism the residents of Candella Estate met on 11th January, 1931, and founded a society known as the "Candella Estate Hindu Sangatan", mainly through the efforts of Mesrs. Lautan Maharaj, F. Sewpersadh, P. Chirkut, B. M. Chaithu and R. Karpath.

Girls' School. In 1934 the Sangatan purchased a piece of land with a view to erecting a school. To raise funds for this they created a dramatic group, "**The Mitra Natak Mundal**", which did laudable work in staging plays and sketches. It was realised at this time that there was another society in the district also contemplating to put up a school. In a way this was good, as it gave an opportunity to the Sangatan to concentrate on the erection of a Girls' School. All the officials and members came forward with enthusiasm

CANDELLA ESTATE HINDU SUNGATAN

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

HINDU SUNGTAN — CANDELLA ESTATE

SCHOOL BUILDING

to make the project a success. Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee rendered valuable asistance to the Sangatan.

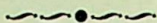
The foundation stone of the Girls' School was laid by the Mayoress of Durban on 1st December, 1935. When completed, Lady Charles G. Smith performed the opening ceremony on 26th January, 1936. On this occasion Lady Smith and Mr. B. Bodasing promised to donate £25 each annually for 10 years. At a tea party arranged by Sorabjee Rustomjee, where distinguished Europeans and Indians were present, much publicity was given to the newly-erected school.

At first Indian parents showed reluctance in sending their girls to schools. As an inducement the Sangatan volunteered to give free tuition to the girls and supply their books. The school commenced with 22 pupils; today it has an enrolment of 180 girls. English education is imparted according to the Education Department's syllabus and Hindi is taught in the afternoons from 3 to 5 p.m. The Sangatan was confronted with great financial difficulties in 1935-1936 but through much sacrifice and perseverance of the officials they were able to meet their obligations.

Activities. Besides the administration of the Girls' School other pressing matters have also received the attention of the Sangatan. In 1943 a Mahela Samaj was formed; it has under its jurisdiction a Bhajan Mandal which has been a source of income to the Society. The Sangatan celebrates its anniversary and religious festivals. Under its auspices lectures have been delivered by distinguished vistors and preachers from India. They hold weekly services every Sunday in co-operation with the local Hindu Seva Samiti. When Mrs. Nanji Kalidas, of East Africa, came to Durban she visted the Candella Estate Girls' School and donated £50 towards the Building Fund. The pupils were provided with a meal at her expense.

Officials and Supporters. The present President of the Sangatan is Mr. R. Karpath—the life of the institution. Mr. P. Chirkut is the Secretary and Mr. B. M. Chaithu the Treasurer. Amongst the active supporters of the Sangatan the names of the late Mr. B. Bachoo and the late Mr. F. Ramlagan will ever be remembered. They were not members of the Sangatan but their services to it are invaluable. Mr. Bachoo toured various parts of Natal and collected funds for the Sangatan. Mr. Ramlagan was instrumental in obtaining a loan for the Sangatan from the Natal Building Society.

Through the assistance of its school manager, Mr. A. Gray, the school attained its Government-aided status in November, 1936. The Sangatan received able and wise guidance from Swami Bhawani Dayal from time to time.

Amongst others who have rendered services to the society the names of the following are worthy of special mention: The late Mr. N. Sewjuthan, the late Mr. B. Garib, the late Mr. B. Bodasing, Messrs. B. Bhagwandeen, B. Rughoonunden, K. Debipersadh, B. Govindh, S. Saligram, R. Algoo, R. Bodasing, K. Gopi, R. Rughoobeer, the late Mr. Sookdeo Singh, Miss Amina Khan, Miss Mayavati Chirkut, Mrs. Sookiavati Rughoobeer, Mrs. Ruth Vinden, Mr. F. Sewpersadh, Mr. L. Rampersadh, Mr. B. Ramnarain Singh and Mrs. Kalyani Devi.

YUVUK ARYA SAMAJ, CLAIRWOOD

Inception. Clairwood—a suburb of Durban— is very densely populated with Indians. For the purpose of spreading the doctrines of the Vedic religion among them Mr. R. B. Bhooshen, with the assistance and support of a few friends, established the "Yuvuk Arya Samaj, Clairwood" on 3rd April, 1932.

Activities. Weekly services are held every Sunday evening by the Samaj. National and religious festivals are celebrated collectively at the Samaj Hall. Lectures by preachers and others from India have been organised from time to time. An offshoot of the Samaj is a Sangeet group through whose labours the Samaj has immensely benefited financially. The tutor in Sangeet is Mr. J. Ramesh. In 1933 a Bhajan Mandal for the express purpose of staging dramas and variety concerts was formed. This has been one of the devices to raise funds. A physical culture club is also run by the Samaj.

School and Hall. A Hindi School was opened by the Samaj on 5th February, 1933. It was conducted for seven years at the residence of Mr. R. Bhooshen—the foundation member of the Samaj—in one of the rooms. No rent was charged by Mr. Bhooshen. Mr. D. Ravibaran and Mr. S. M. Maharaj taught gratis. The number of pupils gradually increased, so the officials and members began to concentrate on purchasing a property and erecting a school. To augment funds the Bhajan Mandal staged six plays, most of which were written by Mr. F. Satyapal, of Pietermaritzburg. With the funds on hand a property was purchased in 1935 and a hall erected. The Hindi school is now conducted on these new premises. All the activities of the Samaj are now centred here.

Due to the increase in the number of pupils the building is becoming too small to meet the demand for more accommodation. The Samaj has, therefore, taken a decision to erect a larger building. They have received the permit from

YUVUK ARYA SAMAJ — CLAIRWOOD

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

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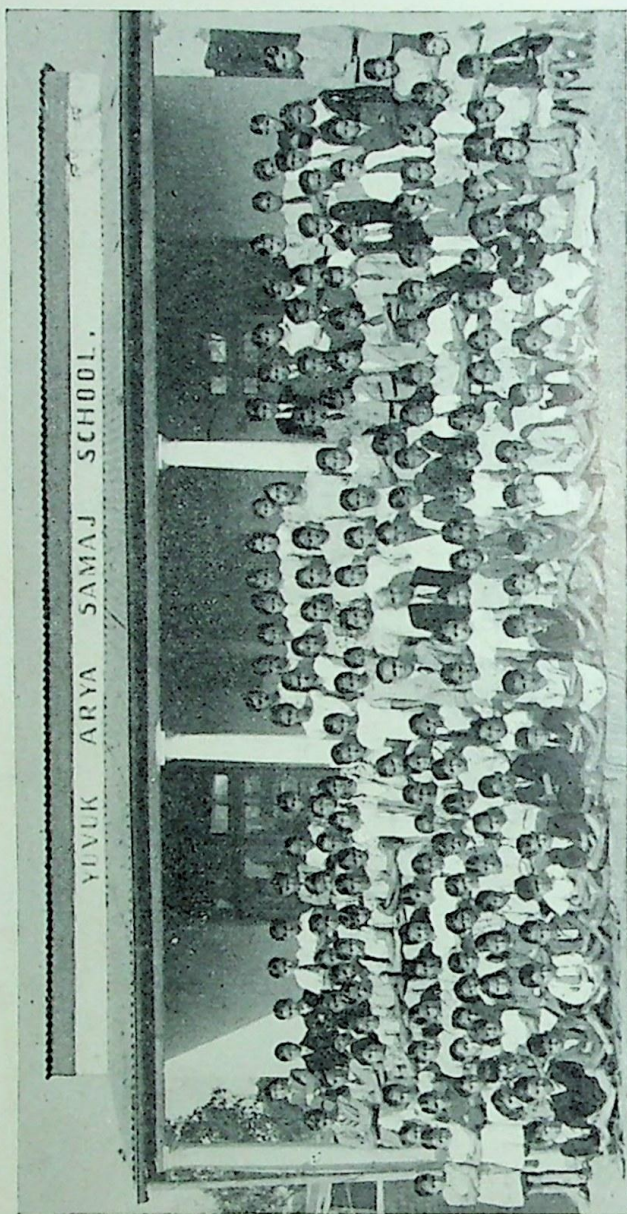
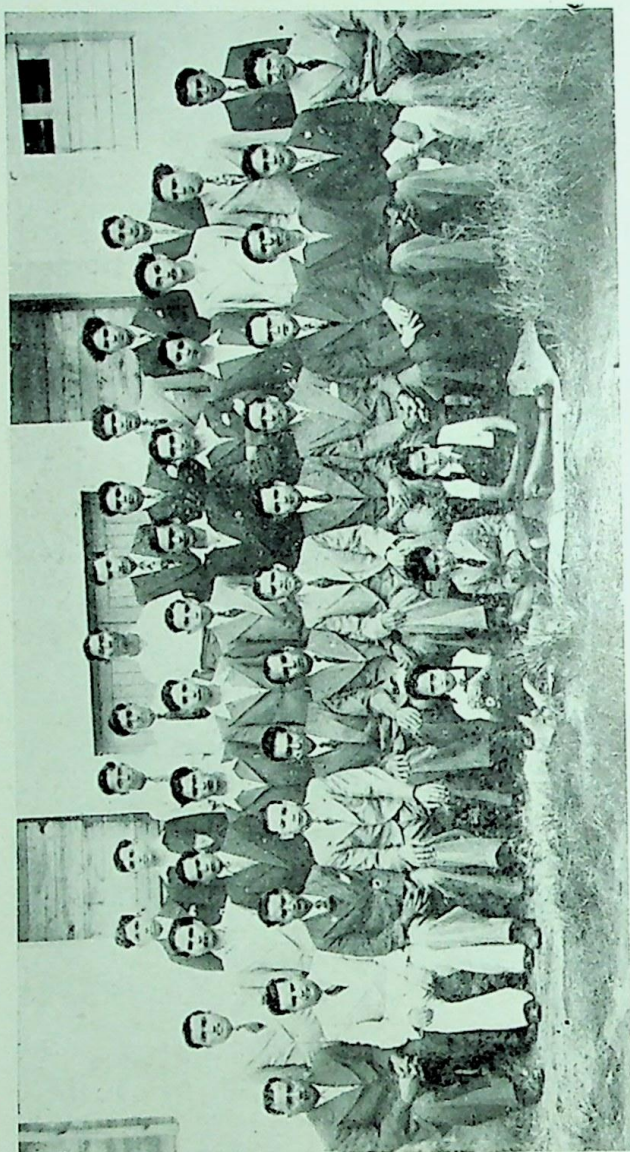

HINDI SCHOOL

YUVUK ARYA SAMAJ — CLAIRWOOD

ORCHESTRA

ARYA SAMAJ — CATO MANOR

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

the Building Controller but the Municipality would not permit the erection of a larger school due to lack of adequate space for a playfield for the children.

At present the Hindi School has an enrolment of 273 pupils. Both morning and afternoon sessions are held. The school is affiliated to the Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal) and its principal is Mr. Ramchander Mahadeo Singh.

Officials and Well-wishers. The present officials of the Samaj are: Mr. Ramanand (Chairman), Mr. J. Baijnath (Secretary) and Mr. P. Kashipersadh (Treasurer). The foremost workers of the Samaj have been Mr. R. Bhooshen and the late Mr. D. Ravibaran, who taught free of charge, formed the Bhajan Mandal and was Secretary of the Samaj for three years. The Samaj sustained an irreparable loss in the death of Mr. Ravibaran—one of its pillars—in 1942.

The assistance given by the following persons to the Samaj will alweys remain on permanent record: Messrs. D. G. Satyadeva, Ishwar Singh, R. B. Lall, Karunduth Persadh, J. Mahadeo, Manilall, B. P. Singh, N. Seithloo, N. Kandhai and P. D. Persadh.

ARYA SAMAJ, CATO MANOR

Inception. On 20th September, 1921, a society for the religious advancement of the residents of Cato Manor was formed. It was named "Shri Satya Vedic Jigyasi Sabha". The prime movers were the late Sadhu Ayodhyadas, the late Mr. S. Padarath, Mr. Ishwarpersadh and Mr. R. Devdutt. The first President was Mr. Ayodhyadas and the Secretary Mr. R. Devdutt. In 1929, at the request of Dr. Bhagatram, the name of the society was changed to **"Arya Samaj, Cato Manor"**.

Activities. Weekly services are conducted; Hindu festivals are celebrated; and good advantage has been taken of the visits of preachers from India. Lectures by them have been organised in their Samaj Hall. From time to time the Samaj has rendered assistance to the destitute and the suffering.

In 1931 one of the Samaj's backbone—Mr. M. Rughoobeer—met a tragic death, which deprived his family of its bread-winner. The Samaj took good care of his wife and children, who are today serving the Samaj laudably.

The "Arya Hithaishi Bhajan Mandal" is subsidiary to the Samaj. It has helped to make most of the younger members music-minded and has been a continual source of

revenue to the Samaj. The Samaj has also under its control an "Arya Vir Dhal" which caters for the physical culture of its members. The Dhal has proved itself very useful to the Hindu community.

Hindi School. One of the aims of the Samaj is to promote the Hindi language which has been imparted to the children ever since the inception of the society. The Hindi School was opened on 20th September, 1921, by the late Mr. Balkishore Maharaj. With the assistance of the Arya Hithaishi Bhajan Mandal the officials of the Samaj purchased a property with a building on Bellair Road, Mayville, in 1931. The buliding has been turned into a Hindi School which was formally opened by the late Mr. B. M. Singh. Messrs. A. Baran, G. Ishwarpersadh, M. Rameprsadh, O. Deonarian, S. Gokool, D. Harichander and the late Mr. Haribhajan have given tuition to the pupils at different times without any remuneration.

The property of the Samaj was purchased by its patron, the late Mr. Sookdeo Singh, for £400. It was his desire to build a Vedic Temple on the property but it was, indeed, a great misfortune that he passed away so soon. The Samaj is, nevertheless, doing everything possible to achieve its object of erecting a Temple.

Officials and Supporters. The President of the Samaj is Mr. R. Devdutt, who has very energetically and enthusiastically interested himself in all undertakings of the society ever since its establishment. The Joint Hon. Secretaries are Messrs. D. S. Padarath and P. Seebran. Mr. D. Harrichander is the Treasurer.

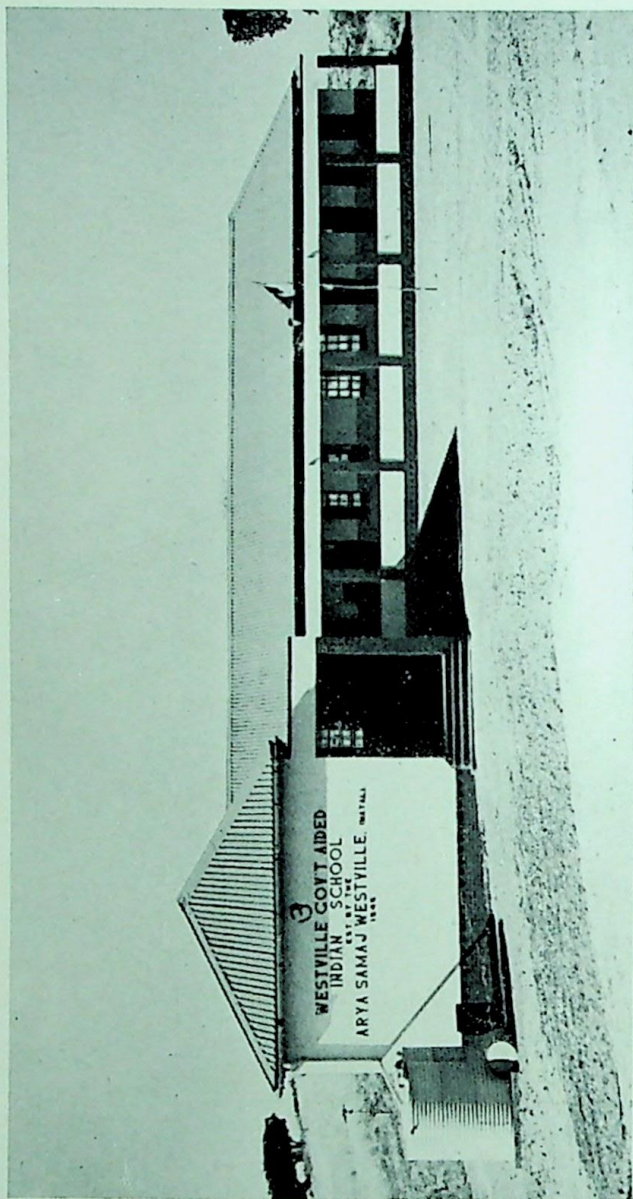
Others who have helped in the successful growth of the society are Messrs. B. Ramauthar, S. Badrinath, C. N. Rana, K. Jugroop, B. Haripersadh, R. Sewpersadh, A. Jungbahadur, B. Bachoo, Devchand, A. Daleepsingh, K. Haripersadh, D. Jithoo, Pt. Gajadhar, S. Prithi, Deobrath, R. Arjun, M. Bhikari, R. Rajkumar, M. Rampersadh and R. R. Persadh.

ARYA SAMAJ, WESTVILLE

Inception. The enthusiastic efforts of 13 persons led to the formation of the Arya Samaj, Rooikopjes, in 1931. In the initial stages progress was very slow. In 1933 a Hindi School was started with 50 pupils who were not charged any school fees. The Samaj was thoroughly overhauled and revived in 1936, ever since which it is known as the "**Arya Samaj, Westville**".

ARYA SAMAJ — WESTVILLE

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

WESTVILLE GOVT. AIDED INDIAN SCHOOL

ARYA SAMAJ — WESTVILLE

Activities. In 1936 the Samaj resolved to purchase a property where it could put up a building to conduct the Hindi School. Through the efforts of Mr. B. Govindh, plays and concerts were staged and funds accumulated. On the Main Road a property was purchased. Under the control of the Samaj a "Seva Dhal" was formed. This Dhal rendered valuable services to the community on occasions such as weddings, public functions, and conferences.

In order to get the women interested in their activities a "Mahela Arya Samaj" was inaugurated on 8th August, 1942. The Mahela Samaj co-operated excellently in collecting funds, holding weekly services and in celebrating festivals and national events. Most of the members received their Yajopavit (sacred thread) from Swami Bhawani Dayal at a grand sanskar performed by him. Lectures by preachers from India have been arranged and held at the Samaj Hall whenever the opportunity was presented them.

The School Building. In the district of Westville there was just one Indian School—the St. Thomas Indian School—run by the Roman Catholic Mission. In 1943 the Mission decided to close the school down. If this came about hundreds of children would have been thrown out of school. To meet the situation the Samaj decided to purchase a suitable property where it could erect a large school. It had only £150 in its treasury so it got a loan of £250, interest free, from Mr. R. Bodasing. The loan was later converted into a donation on the completion of the building.

To erect a large school building the Samaj managed to obtain a loan of £4,500 from the Standard Building Society. The Provincial Administration agreed to give half of the cost of the building. Mr. B. Bachoo undertook the task of erecting the building. He had to advance a large sum of money out of his own pocket to see the completion through. With the assistance of "Nav Jivan Vidya Mandal," a unit of the Samaj, it has been possible to pay all monies owing to Mr. B. Bachoo, the Building Contractor.

To collect funds for the Samaj, Messrs. B. Govindh, the President, Mr. D. G. Satyadeva and Mr. Debipersadh visited the Transvaal a few years back. Much support has also been received from Mr. S. L. Singh. The foundation stone of the school building was laid by Mr. R. Bodasing in 1945 and the opening of the completed building was done on 28th July, 1946, by Mr. B. Sookdeo Singh.

Even at the present moment the Samaj has a very large amount to pay to the Standard Building Society. Last year the Samaj got into great financial difficulties; it was not able to meet the instalments on the repayment of the loan; the Building Society issued threatening letters to take legal

action. At such a critical moment Mr. B. Purmasir, of Durban, came to the timely rescue of the Samaj and prevented the school building property from being sold by paying the Building Society a sum of £396, being the arrear instalments, as a donation to the Samaj. Mr. B. Purmasir's contribution is the largest donation the Samaj has received. The financial assistance rendered by Mr. Purmasir is very much appreciated and will always be remembered by the officials and members of the Samaj.

Officials and Well-wishers. The present officials are Mr. B. Govindh (President), Mr. R. Deonarain (Secretary) and Mr| K. Debipersadh (Treasurer). It is regrettable that the Samaj has sustained a great blow in the deaths of its two foundation members, Mr. B. Bachoo and Mr. D. Seithloo, who gave much of their time, money and energy in advancing the cause of the Samaj. Others who have rendered assistance are Messrs. Ishwarpersadh, Rughoonunan, S. Chotai, Harichander, Kissoon, P. Rampersadh and R. Shanker.

MAHELA ARYA SAMAJ, WESTVILLE

Inception. Through the efforts of the Arya Samaj, Westville, and with the assistance of the officials of the Durban Stri Arya Samaj, the "Mahela Arya Samaj", of Westville, was formed on 26th July, 1942, at a meeting which was presided over by Mr. B. Govindh. The officials elected were: Mrs. Dharmavati Seithloo (President), Misses Shantivati and Jugrani (Jt. Hon. Secretaries) and Mrs. Sookraji Baijnath (Treasurer). The Mahela Samaj was officially opened on 8th August, 1942, by Mrs. A. P. Singh. On this occasion a reception was accorded to Pt. Harishanker Ayurvedalankar.

Activities. The relationship between the two Samajes of Westville is cordial, harmonious and co-operative. The Mahela Samaj has been successful in raising large sums of money for the school building by organising bazaars and staging concerts. Festivals have been celebrated and other functions held conjointly by both the Samajes.

In addition to the officials the Mahela Samaj has received the co-operation of the following in its undertakings: Mrs. V. Lallsingh, Mrs. P. B. Singh, Mrs. P. Rampersadh, Mrs. Devaki Deonarain and others.

NAGARI PRACHARNI SABHA, SPRINGFIELD

Inception. To foster the study of Hindi in the district of Springfield a society named **"Nagari Pracharni Sabha"**

MAHILA ARYA SAMAJ — WESTVILLE

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

NAGARI PRACHARINI SABHA — SPRINGFIELD

FOUNDATION MEMBERS

was established in 1917. One of the objects of the Sabha was also to bring about religious awakening in the district. The main founders of the Sabha were Messrs. Laganbarthi, Budree Udit, R. Heeralall, the late Mr. Ramchuran and the late Mr. C. Beepath.

Activities. The victims of the 1917 Umgeni flood were asisted by the Sabha. They were provided with food, clothing, medicine and shelter. The preachers who came to this country from time to time from India were taken to Springfield for the purpose of enlightening the local residents on the sublime teachings of the Vedic religion.

School. From the very inception of the Sabha a Hindi School has been in existence. The first Hindi teacher was Mr. Ishwarpersadh, followed later by Mr. Ramavatar Shukla who served for the long period of 19 years. To run the Hindi School without any financial embarrassment two dramatic companies, **"The Satya Deepak Natak Mandal"** and **"The Vidya Woonathi Natak Mandal"** were formed. They swelled the funds of the Sabha with the proceeds from the plays. The Sabha was thereby enabled to erect a building.

In 1928 education in English began to be also imparted to the children. Through the perseverance of Mr. B. Udit the Private School received "Government-Aided" status in 1929 and came to be officially known as Hindi Government-Aided Indian School. Hindi education continues to be given in the afternoons after the closure of the English school.

The Sabha has purchased a new site on which it intends to erect a modern school costing about £9,000. Mr. N. Debipersadh gave a donation of £100 towards the purchase of the land.

Acting on the instruction of the Durban City Council the old school building has had to be demolished as the site on which it was built was required by the Municipality for the erection of economic and sub-economic houses. The Sabha has been placed in a terrible predicament as all the children have been dehoused. At such a critical juncture the **Springfield Hindu Sabha** came to its rescue by allowing its own school building in Alpine Road to be used as a Platoon School. The Sabha is, indeed, indebted to the Springfield Hindu Sabha for this service.

Officials and Well-wishers. The present officials are Mr. D. Jadhunundan (President), Mr. R. Chhotai (Secretary) and Mr. D. Lachman (Treasurer). Other ardent supporters and active workers are as follows: Messrs. B. Sewpersadh, D. Audhbehari, J. Bharatram, M. Dookran, K. Bachoo, K. Dookie, B. Jugnunan, R. Phakoo and M. Rampukar. The late Mr. B. R. Panee, the late Mr. Gangadeen and the late Mr. Ganga Sharan were valuable members of the Sabha.

ARYA SAMAJ, SPRINGFIELD

Inception and Activities. Through the hard work and enthusiasm of the late Mr. B. Ishwarpersadh the **Arya Samaj, Springfield,** was founded on 22nd August, 1941. The opening function mas presided over by Mr. D. G. Satyadeva. As the Samaj had no premises of its own it conducted the school on the premises of the local Nagari Pracharni Sabha. There were at first 150 school children and Messrs. B. Ishwarpersadh and Girdhari were the teachers. Due to a number of difficulties the Samaj had to reluctantly close the school down.

Building. With the proceeds resulting from shows staged by the Samaj it has been able to procure a piece of land in almost the centre of the Springfield Housing Scheme of the Durban Municipality. It is the intention of the Samaj to build a hall on its property and use it as a real community centre from where care can be taken of the educational, religious and social needs of the hundreds of people occupying the Corporation-owned houses.

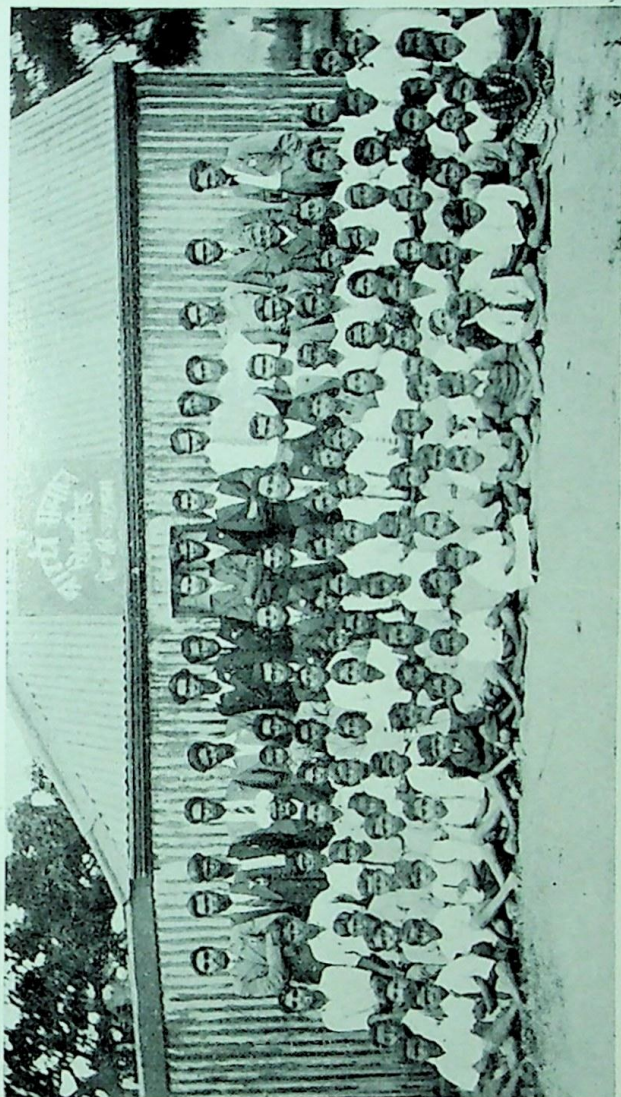
Officials and Supporters. The officials of the Samaj at present are: Mr. B. Rampersadh (President), Mr. M. Bechan (Secretary) and Mr. I. Devchand (Treasurer). Others interested are Messrs. K. Ramlagan, S. Comal, G. Lalla, B. Munbodh, S. L. Singh, D. G. Satyadeva, A. E. Mallinson (Estates Manager, Durban Municipality). The death of Mr. B. Ishwarpersadh, its founder, in 1948, was a great blow to the Samaj and, hence, had the effect of retarding its progress.

ARYA SANGEET MANDAL, DURBAN

Inception. In keeping Indian culture alive abroad Sangeet plays an important part. Indian songs, music and drama appeal to the Indians more than Western music, etc. In order to advance Indian Sangeet in this country, a musical society was founded under the leadership and guidance of Mr. D. Roopanand, in 1930. It was called the "**Arya Sangeet Mandal, Durban**". Besides Mr. Roopanand the other foundation members were Messrs. P. H. Narsee, G. Ramlukhun, D. Ramdutt and R. Ramshanker.

Function. Very little of Indian Sangeet was known in this country prior to the establishment of the Arya Sangeet Mandal. The credit goes to the Sangeet Mandal for popularising Indian music. Today in every locality there is a Bhajan or Sangeet Mandal.

The Arya Sangeet Mandal has served the Indian Community very creditably by rendering music free of charge

ARYA SAMAJ — SPRINGFIELD

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

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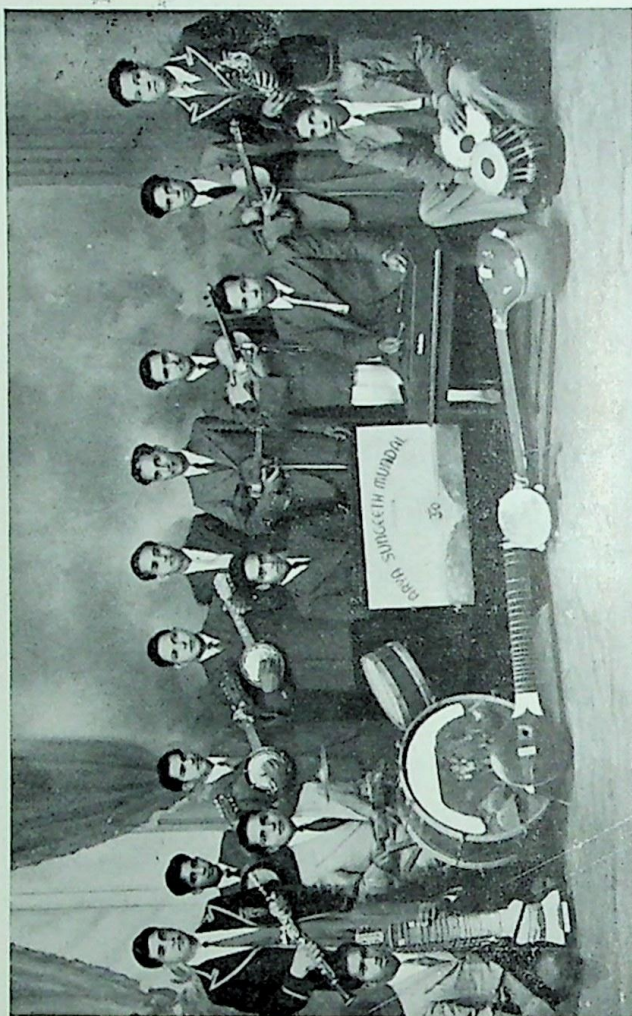
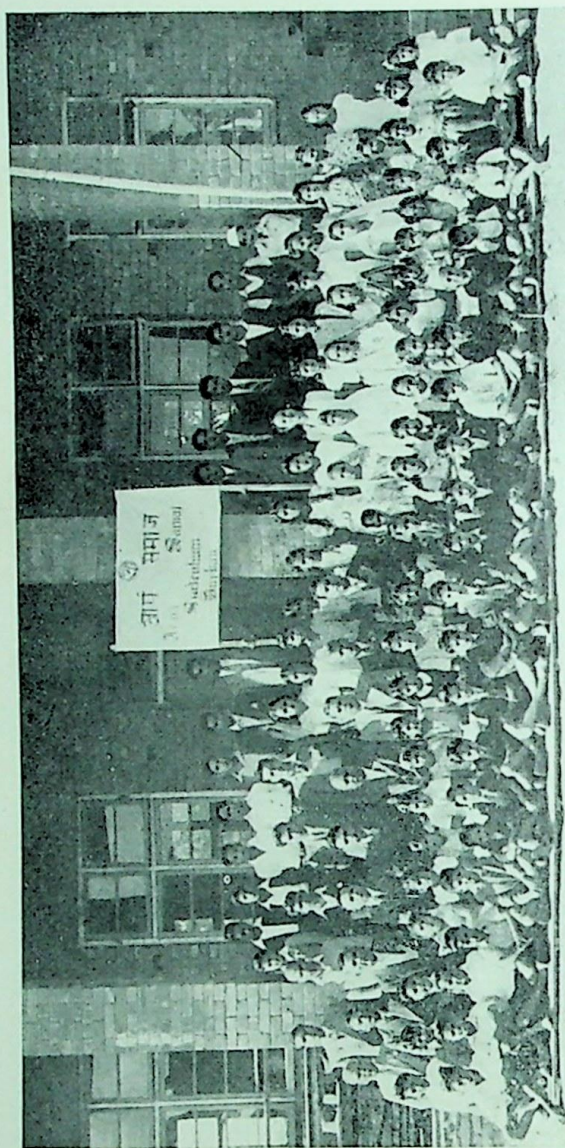

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

ARYA BHAJAN MUNDAL — DURBAN

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

ARYA SAMAJ — SYDENHAM

OFFICIALS, MEMBERS AND STUDENTS

on important public functions from time to time. Full co-operation has been given by the Mandal in making lecture tours of the various preachers from India successful. Deepavali, Births of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, and Indian Independence Day are celebrated annually by the Mandal. The Mandal has also rendered financial assistance to Mr. D. Roopanand and Mr. D. Seebran in their study of Sangeet in India. On a number of occasions the Mandal has broadcast national and religious songs and Indian music from the Durban studio.

Officials and Benefactors. The present officials are Mr. G. Ramdutt (President), Mr. J. D. Yoganand (Secretary) and Mr. D. R. Deepanand (Treasurer). Messrs. J. Ramlukhan and P. H. Narsee are the tutors. Amongst those who have interested themselves in the activities of the Mandal are Messrs. N. Madanjeeth, K. B. Singh, B. J. Maharaj, Sookraj Chotai, the late Mr. R. S. Persadh and the late Mr. M. R. Varma.

ARYA SAMAJ, SYDENHAM

With a view to awakening the Indians of Sydenham a society called the **Arya Samaj, Sydenham,** was founded on 19th February, 1929, mainly through the efforts of Mr. D. G. Satyadeva. The Samaj has been alive to its responsibility of inculcating Vedic ideals in the youths and others of the district.

On behalf of the Samaj, Pandit Tulsiram wrote three booklets, namely, "Anthyeshti Sanskar", "Satya Sanatan Dharma kya hai", and "Vedic Sandhya and Prarthana". These were printed and distributed free of charge. Societies which give attention to the production of Vedic literature are in a very small minority. The Arya Samaj of Sydenham deserves every congratulation for having undertaken this very necessary task.

The Samaj celebrates its festivals—the Deepavali, Holi—and birthdays of great personages. The priest of the Samaj performs Naamkaran, Choodakarma, Annaprashan, Vivaha, Anthyeshti and other Sanskars. For some time the Samaj conducted a Hindi School and held weekly services.

ARYA STRI SAMAJ, DURBAN

The Stri Samaj was established on 24th January, 1942, through the efforts of Mrs. S. L. Singh and Mrs. A. P. Singh. Monthly meetings of the members are organised by

the Samaj. During Deepavali the inmates of the Aryan Benevolent Home are supplied with meals and clothing. The Samaj has rendered assistance to various societies in collecting funds.

At present the presidential post is held by Mrs. Lallsingh. Mrs. D. Roopanand is the Secretary and Mrs. Bijon the Treasurer. Active co-operation in the activities of the Samaj is received from Mesdames R. Ramklaas, D. Satyadeva, Debisingh, B. Purmasir, P. B. Singh, H. Bodasingh, J. Maganlal, R. Shishupal, Atmanand and others.

ARYA MITRA MANDAL, SYDENHAM

The Arya Mitra Mandal, Sydenham, was founded in 1939 to spread the Vedic doctrines. They held regular weekly sittings and had interesting discussions on religions and cultural matters. They opened a Hindi School for the youths, and later in 1940 one for the children. The school was held at the homes of the members. In 1942 the Essendene Road Indian School was used to impart Hindi education. At one time there were 200 pupils in the Hindi School. The scope of the Mandal was widened in 1944 when an "Arya Balak Mandal", an "Arya Kanya Mandal" and a "Seva Dhal" were formed. Under the auspices of the Mandal, festivals have been celebrated and Sanskars performed.

To give wider publicity to the principles of the Vedic religion a monthly periodical named "Torchbearer" was published by the Mandal. Within a short time it became very popular and in a sense for a short while it was the mouthpiece of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. The Aryan world was kept informed through its medium of the activities of the different societies. During the war it was found necessary to dispense with the publication due to the acute shortage of paper.

ARYA BHAJAN MANDAL, DURBAN

The Arya Bhajan Mandal came into existence with the sole purpose of furthering Indian Sangeet. Its members meet once a week to practice. The Mandal has rendered musical items at several places and in this way served the community. The President of the Mandal is Mr. B. Sewdeen.

ARYA YUVUK MANDAL, SEA COW LAKE

Inception. On the northern side of the Umgeni River lies the district of Sea Cow Lake where the influence of the

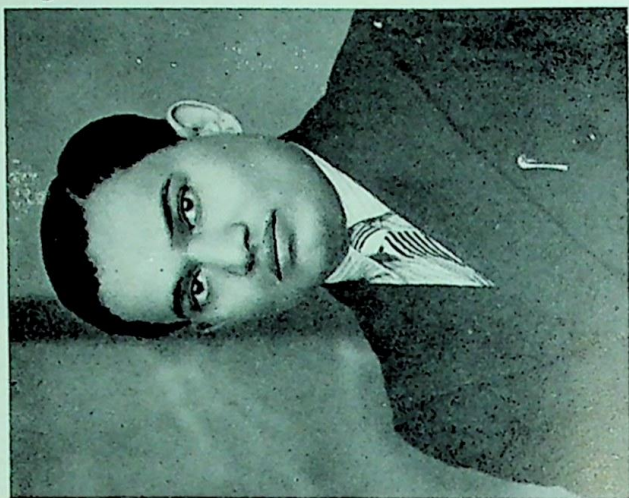
ARYA STHREE SAMAJ — DURBAN

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

ARYA MITRA MANDAL — SYDENHAM

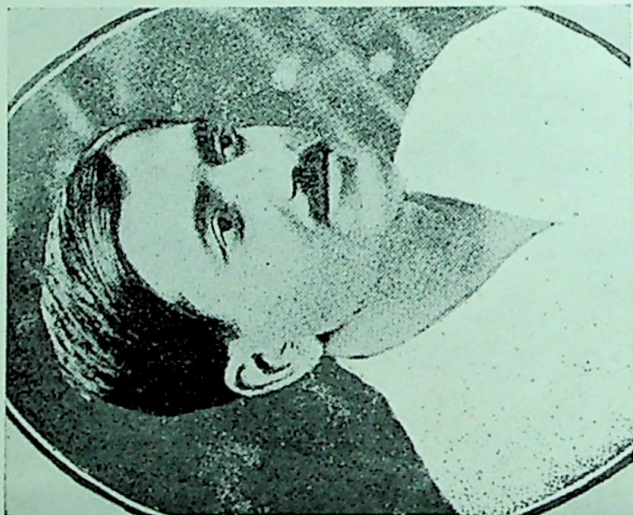
OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

ARYA YUVUK MUNDAL — SEA COW LAKE

Officials and Members with Pt. Gangaprasad Upadhyaya

PT. ANANDPRIYA

Secretary:

Arya Kumar Maha Sabha, Baroda

THE LATE PT. SUDHIR KUMAR VIDYALANKAR

Christians and Muslims is much felt. There is a large population of Hindus also. For the benefit of the Hindus there is a Vishnu Mandir (Temple) and also a society called "Vedic Sanmarka Sabha". In 1912 Pt. V. C. Nayanarajh opened a vernacular school in the locality as an offshoot of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha, Durban, at the residence of Mr. Guruswami Moodley. Later the school was conducted at the residence of Mr. V. C. Nayanarajh. The pupils of the Hindi School formed a Bal Mitra Mandal which on 4th November, 1929, came to assume the name of **Arya Yuvuk Mandal.** The officials elected were Mr. V. C. Nayanarajh (President) and Mr. S. Narain (Secretary).

Activities. The Mandal held weekly sittings and performed the "Havan" ceremony regularly. A number of Hindus became hostile to the Mandal. They contended that only Brahman-born Hindus had the right to perform sanskars. Once they actually came with the intention of having a fight but the cool and collected attitude of the officials of the Mandal simply put them to shame. On the departure of Mr. Nayanarajh from the district Mr. J. Maganlal took up the reins and served the Mandal commendably as its Secretary.

Mr. K. P. Peter granted the Mandal the free use of a piece of his land on which subsequently a small building was put up and a Hindi school run. The Mandal also instituted a night school. In 1933 the Mandal was placed in a very sad predicament. The property on which the school building was situated was sold by Mr. K. P. Peter to one Mohammed Akoonji. The officials of the Mandal made every endeavour to purchase the plot. Mr. Peter had promised to donate the land to the Mandal but, as there was no written undertaking, all efforts were in vain. In this venture money, time and labour were all wasted. Ever since then the progress of the Mandal has been considerably retarded. The Mandal's Hindi School was held at different times at the homes of Mr. S. J. Narain, Mr. G. Rampersadh, Mr. J. Sewmungal, and Mr. B. Rooplall.

HINDI PRACHARNI SABHA, AVOCA

Twelve years ago a Hindi Pracharni Sabha was established in Avoca. The Sabha commenced its work by opening a Hindi School through the medium of which instruction in Vedic knowledge is also given. A number of people rose up in opposition but through the efforts of Mr. Ishwarbilas, the Chairman of the local Temple Committee, peace was restored.

Weekly services began to be conducted. A night school was established for the benefit of the youths. An Stri Samaj and a Physical Culture School were also inaugurated. From time to time preachers from India gave lectures to its members and other residents of the district.

The patron of the Sabha was Mr. Sunderpersadh. Inactivity set in after his death and gradually activities of the Sabha came to a standstill. It was also unfortunate that the Secretary of the Sabha also left the district and went away somewhere else. The Hindi School is not functioning. The people are still interested in religious and vernacular educational work and if attempts are made to resuscitate the body possibly some good can come about.

The President of the Sabha is Mr. S. A. Naidoo, the Secretary Mr. Kalipersadh and the Treasurer Mr. J. Sewpal.

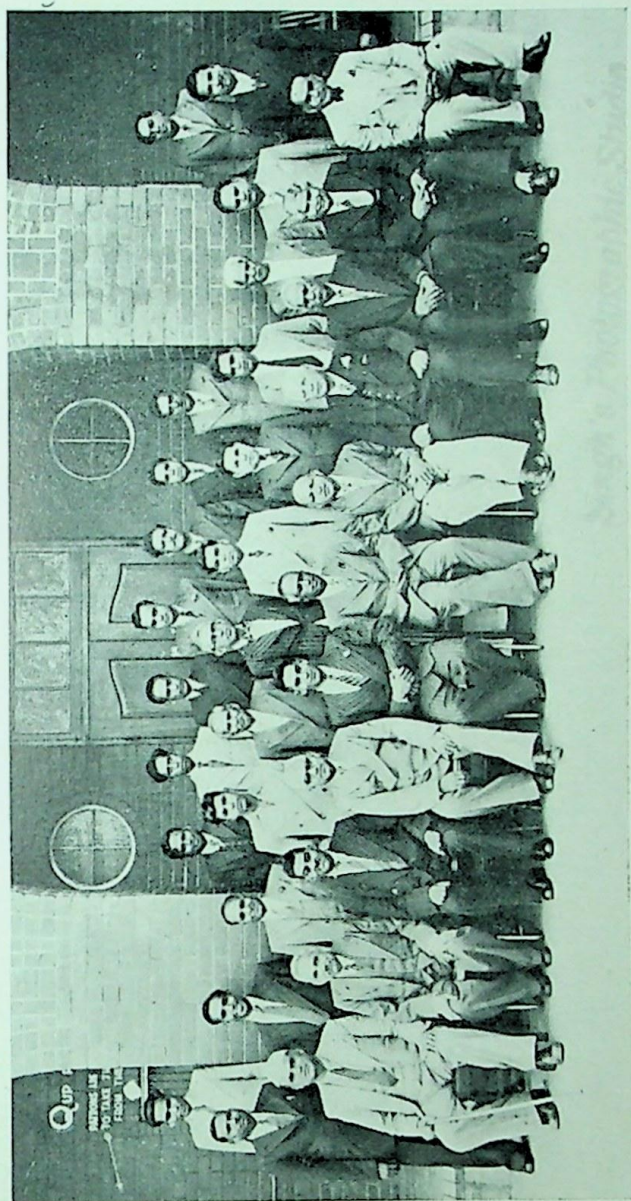
CHAPTER XII

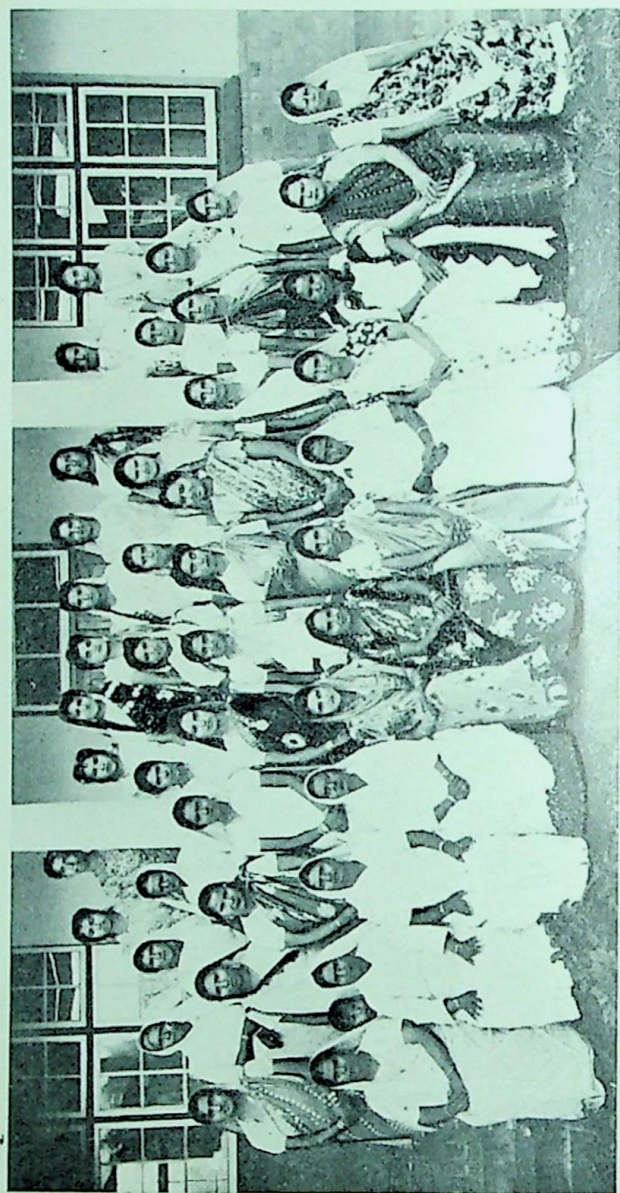
Other Vedic Institutions of Natal

VEDA DHARMA SABHA, PIETERMARITZBURG

Inception. The Indian population of the city of Pietermaritzburg is approximately 10,000. A large number of the people are Hindus. To improve their religious and social condition Messrs. Gaisingh, Makkansingh and Bhikari Maharaj, all born in India, established an Arya Samaj in 1908. It was the first Arya Samaj founded in South Africa. When Swami Shankernandji visited Pietermaritzburg in the same year he realised that the name "**Arya Samaj**" was not too popular so he changed it to "**Veda Dharma Sabha**". Swamiji's activities in the city helped considerably to revitalise the society. A property where the functions of the Sabha could be centred was purchased by the Swamiji himself. The efforts of the Swamiji gave an impetus to a number of interested persons to open an Aryan Anathashram (Aryan orphanage) which houses today a number of orphans.

The Veda Dharma Sabha contributed largely to the success of the Second Hindi Literary Conference held in Pietermaritzburg in 1917. The Conference had its desired effect: a few schools to impart Hindi were opened in the outskirts of the city. In 1921 a society named "**Vidya Pracharni Sabha**", solely for the purpose of managing the Hindi School, was founded. It later found it necessary for the preservation of unity among the people to amalgamate with the Veda Dharma Sabha with an asset of £140.

VEDA DHARMA SABHA — PIETERMARITZBURG

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

HINDU STHREE SAMAJ — PIETERMARITZBURG

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

Erection of Hall. In 1934 the Sabha purchased a property in Church Street for £1,750. Subsequently, part of the property was sold at a good price. At a great sacrifice of time and energy the officials of the Sabha erected a large hall for £3,000. The foundation stone of this splendid edifice was laid by Mr. Kuppie Murrie and the opening was done by the great Indian philosopher, Sir Radhakrishnan, on 7th April, 1939.

Inception of Arya Samaj and its Amalgamation with Veda Dharma Sabha. When Dr. Bhagatram visited this country in 1929 he changed the names of many institutions to "**Arya Samaj**". He advised the Veda Dharma Sabha to effect such a change but the proposal was opposed by most of the members. Thereupon he formed a new body at the residence of Mr. F. Satyapal and called it "Arya Samaj, Pietermaritzburg". Pt. R. B. Maharaj was elected the President and Messrs. S. Maharaj and R. Bunwari Joint Hon. Secretaries. The Samaj bought a property with a building for £1,150. Being keenly desirous of not disrupting the unity of the people, the Samaj merged into the Veda Dharma Sabha with all its assets in 1941. Another society named "Satya Vardhak Sabha" also amalgamated with the Sabha in 1940 with £950 assets.

Hindi School and Propagation of Vedic Ideals. A Hindi School consisting of 220 pupils classified into 6 standards is conducted under the jurisdiction of the Sabha. The principal of the school is Pt. Jugmohan (Vidyaratan) who attained higher education in Hindi at Lahore in India. He also made a study of the teachings of the Vedic religion. Equipped with this knowledge he has been able to advance the cause of Hindi education and Vedic religion energetically and efficiently. He is assisted by six teachers, some of whom are ladies. The school is affiliated to the Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal). Those who have given Hindi tuition at different times are as follows:—

Pt. Ramprasad Panday, Pt. Dashrath Panday, Pt. Shivanarain Panday, Mr. Sardhwan Singh, Mr. Pushkarnath, Mr. R. Bunwari, Mr. Maikooram, Mr. Ramprathapsingh, Pt. Sadanand Doobey and Babu Ramballi Singh.

Every Sunday, weekly services are conducted by the Sabha. With a view to getting the women interested in religious and social work a "Hindu Stri Samaj" has been formed. All important festivals and events are celebrated under the auspices of the Sabha. The anniversary of the Sabha is celebrated grandly. In 1934 the Sabha celebrated its Silver Jubilee.

The Sabha has taken the initiative and at other times co-operated with other institutions in organising welcome

receptions in honour of visiting preachers and learned men from India. Satisfactory arrangements for lectures by distinguished visitors to the city have been made from time to time. The Sabha holds annually a bazaar to raise funds for the proper management of the Hindi School. Amounts realised in different years have ranged from £200 to £300. A sum of £50 is spent annually to render assistance to the orphans and the poor. The total assets of the Sabha at the moment is about £10,000.

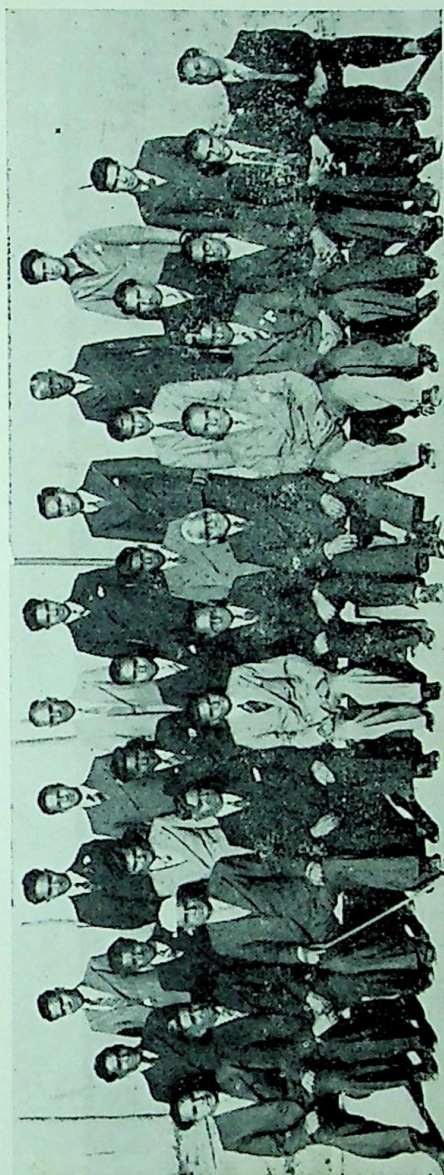
Officials and Benefactors. The present officials are: Mr. Devanand Sarawan (President), Messrs. Ranchor Bunwari and B. Bookhan (Jt. Hon. Secretaries) and Mr. Motiram Sewpaul (Treasurer). A very large number of people have rendered invaluable assistance to the Sabha. In fact it was through their support that the Sabha was able to make the progress it did. The names of some of the benefactors are as follows: The late Mr. Gai Singh, the late Mr. Bramdeo, the late Mr. Boolaki, the late Mr. Hanooman, the late Mr. Ramchab Maharaj, the late Mr. N. V. Naik, the late Mr. D. K. Soni, the late Mr. B. Ramchuran, the late Mr. Sunder, the late Mr. Sewchuran Singh, the late Mr. Bhagwandeen, the late Mr. Makkan Singh, the late Mr. Paragji Soni, the late Mr. Sarawan, the late Mr. Jhoota Patel, the late Mr. Haribhai Mackenji, the late Mr. Charlie Nulliah, the late Mr. Padamsingh, and the late Mr. Gunpath Singh.

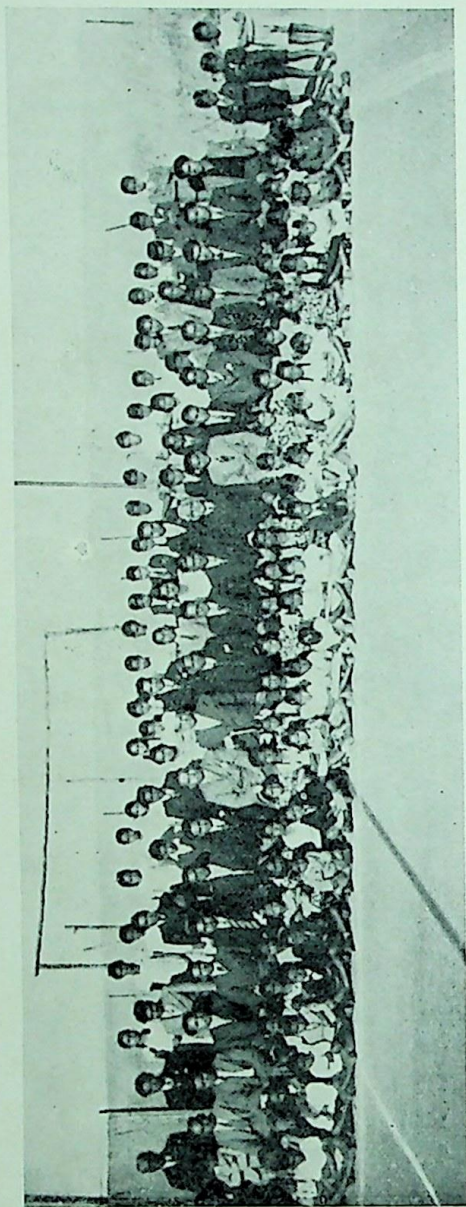
Amongst those who show keen interest at present are: Messrs. Somchand Vather, Damji Vather, R. Bodasing, M. N. Bhoola, Pt. R. B. Maharaj, F. Satyapal, Babu Ramballi Singh, E. Gooldeep, Ghela Dayaram, Prabhoo Mackenji, R. Rajkumar, G. Jagwanth, M. Ramdeen, B. Sewpaul, G. S. Maharaj, A. V. Moodley, J. B. Singh, T. Ramkelawan, Gopal Damji Soni, B. Nagasur, J. M. Soni, Kallichuran, Harikison Ghela and R. Vadjie.

HINDU STRI SAMAJ, PIETERMARITZBURG

Inception. Through the efforts of the Veda Dharma Sabha the Hindu Stri Samaj of Pietermaritzburg was established on 4th April, 1943, to awaken the women and spread the tenets of the Vedic religion among them. Pandit R. B. Maharaj, Mr. F. Satyapal and Mr. E. Gooldeep gave every encouragement and help to the Samaj which was formally opened on 9th May, 1943, by Mrs. Sushila Ben Manilal Gandhi (daughter-in-law of the late Mahatma Gandhi). Mrs. Gandhi delivered a stirring address on the advancement of women.

Activities. Once a year a religious gathering on a large scale is organised by the Samaj. Monthly sittings are also

ARYA SAMAJ — PLESSISLAER

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

ARYA SAMAJ — PLESSISLAER

OFFICIALS, MEMBERS & STUDENTS

held. When the women meet they hold healthy and fruitful discussions on matters of interest to them. The Samaj celebrates all festivals and has its own Sevika Dhal which renders useful service on occasions such as weddings and public functions.

The officials and members of the Samaj give their fullest co-operation to the Veda Dharma Sabha in making their bazaars successful by doing needlework and by making tea, cakes, sweetmeats, etc., and by helping to sell the goods.

The Stri Samaj also renders assistance to the poor and the suffering. On behalf of the Samaj an indigent woman named Bhagwandevi was kept at the residence of Mr. F. Satyapal for 1½ years. Similarly, the Samaj took care of six orphans whom they later sent to the Aryan Benevolent Home, Durban. A 16-year-old girl inmate of the Ashram was married at the expense of the Samaj.

The Stri Samaj is always willing to lend a helping hand to other institutions. Sometimes its members collect funds for them. The Samaj collected £20 for the relief of the Indo-African riots. A sum of £25 was raised and donated to the Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal) a few months back.

The present chairlady of the Samaj is Mrs. R. B. Maharaj. Mrs. S. Jugmohan is the secretary, and Mrs. D. Bramdeo the treasurer. The following have worked with great zeal to advance the cause of the Stri Samaj: Mesdames D. K. Soni, D. R. Vather, E. Gooldeep, B. Sunder, T. Ramkelawan, B. Ramchuran, F. Satyapal, B. Sewpaul, R. Tilak, M. Maikoo, Parag, R. Rajkumar, S. D. Chetty and Miss Ramdulari.

ARYA SAMAJ, PLESSISLAER

Inception. Not far away from Pietermaritzburg lies the village of Plessislaer, where a good number of Hindu families are settled. In this locality the Christian Mission conducts an English School which is attended by about 500 Indian children. The absence of any Hindu institutions in the district was a matter of great concern to Mr. F. Satyapal so he summoned a mass meeting of the Hindus resident there on 30th June, 1924, when a society named "Nagri Hithaishi Sabha" was formed. This was subsequently changed to Arya Samaj, Plessislaer, on the advice of Dr. Bhagatram Sahagal in 1929.

Activities. Weekly services are conducted, religious and national festivals celebrated and lectures by preachers from India organised. The Samaj sees to the needs of the

destitute and the poor in the community. At first the residents of Mount Partridge were also members of this Samaj. In 1934, under the leadership of Mr. Gunga Bishoon, they broke away and formed their own Samaj. Ever since 1934 Mr. S. Dookran, who is a very energetic and zealous worker, is the President. He has been able to rally the youths of the district round him.

Samaj's Building and School. The officials of the Samaj had a great desire to own their own building, so they formed a Bhajan Mandal which successfully staged a play entitled "Kooni Kanjar," written by Mr. F. Satyapal, and this brought revenue to the Samaj. The funds of the Samaj were used to purchase a property on which Pandit Jugmohan later performed a Vedic Katha. The question of erecting a suitable hall on the property proved a difficult one. The mission authorities withdrew the permission once granted to the Samaj to conduct its Hindi school on its premises. This made the Samaj members to concentrate on the erection of a building more resolutely. They staged plays, went from place to place collecting, held bazaars, and, in fact, devised all sorts of ways and means to raise funds.

On 18th September, 1949, the foundation stone of their proposed building was laid by Mr. F. Satyapal, its founder, before a large gathering of people. On this occasion Pandit Nardev Vedalankar delivered a powerful and impressive speech on "Arya Samaj" and its Principles. Other speakers of importance were Pt. Jugmohan, Mr. S. L. Singh and Mr. D. G. Satyadeva.

The Samaj conducts a Hindi School which has an enrolment of 130 pupils. Tuition is given free of charge. In this locality Pt. Jugmohan has opened a night school and trains young men to become preachers. The Hindi teachers are increasing their efficiency by writing the examinations conducted by the Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti. The Samaj's assets are valued at £3,100.

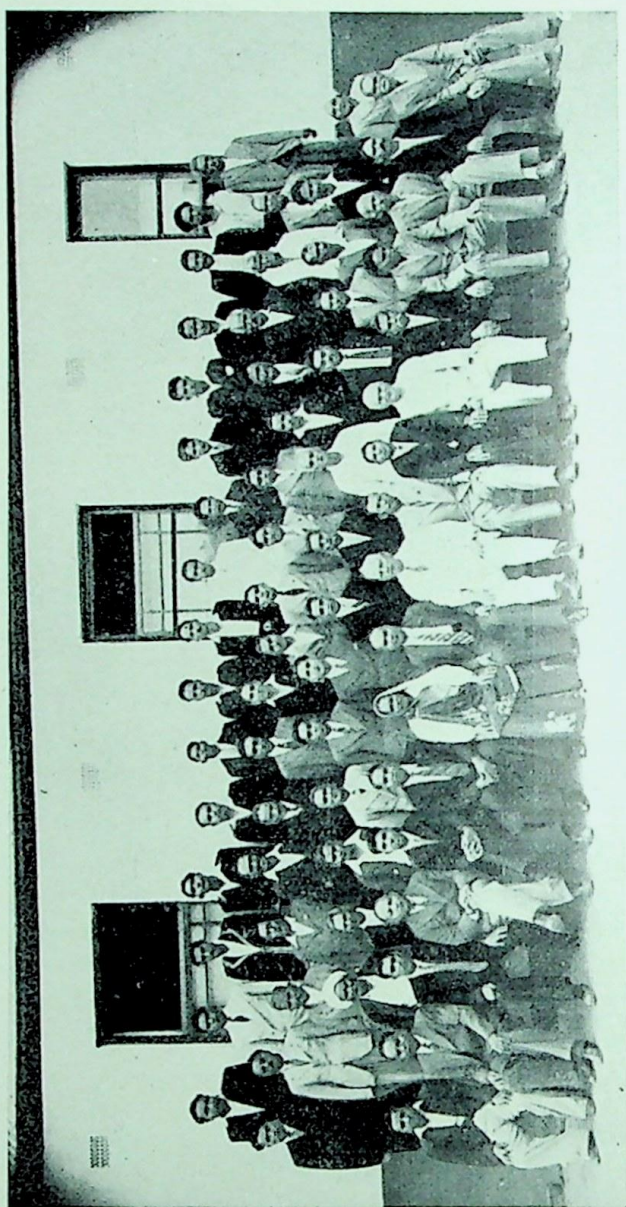
Officials and Supporters. Mr. S. Dookran is the President, Mr. D. Bundhoo the Secretary and Mr. J. G. Bishoon the Treasurer. Others who have rendered much service are Messrs. M. N. Bhoola, K. Pardesi, D. S. Vather, S. Ramdeen, D. Chedi, Ramsudh Marie, M. Bundhoo, B. Harkoo, L. Rampersadh, L. B. Sangam, Gunga Bishoon, B. Bhola, Ramjuthan, P. R. Singh, Lakshmansingh, Satyabhooshen, D. R. Singh, R. Bunwari, Miss Dulari and Mrs. Ramkissoon.

ARYA STRI SAMAJ, PLESSISLAER

The local Arya Samaj was instrumental in the formation of the Stri Samaj which took place on 13th September, 1942.

ARYA STHREE SAMAJ — PLESSISLAER

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

VEDIC VIDYA PRACHARK SABHA — PENTRICH

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

Pt. Jugmohan also encouraged the formation and it was he who did the formal opening.

At first the womenfolk of this locality were in a backward state; there was hardly any awakening among them. The officials of the Stri Samaj had to learn themselves first how to recite the sandhya and perform the havan, which they subsequently popularised among the womenfolk of the district. The holding of weekly services and the celebration of festivals, etc., were thereby greatly facilitated. There is a very close and harmonious co-operation between the Stri Samaj and the local Arya Samaj particularly in regard to the running of the Hindi school. The Stri Samaj gave much assistance to the victims of the Indo-African riots of 1949.

The present officials are Mrs. L. Dookran (chairlady), Mrs. H. Arjoon and Miss Champavati (joint hon. secretaries) and Miss Savimati Bundhoo (treasurer). The Samaj has received full support from the following:—Mesdames Pardesi, R. Bundhoo, H. Bachoo, S. Ramdeen, S. Chedi, M. Ramdeen, F. Satyapal, D. Bundhoo and Seebran.

VEDIC VIDYA PRACHARAK SABHA, PENTRICH

Inception. One of the suburbs of Pietermaritzburg is Pentrich, where a fairly large number of Indians are settled. Most of them are Hindi-speaking people. On the 2nd of February, 1928, the Vedic Vidya Pracharak Sabha was founded through the enthusiastic efforts of Mr. Ramballi Singh, Mr. B. Poodhun, Mr. S. Poodhun and Mr. T. D. Sewbrath.

School. In the initial stages children were taught Hindi in a tin shanty. At first 25 pupils enrolled and the teacher was Lakshmansingh. Later the Sabha decided to erect a better building. Mr. Ramballi Singh became a pillar of strength. Through his perseverance a sum of money was accumulated. In 1932 the Sabha was proud to have a hall of its own. Today the Hindi School has 250 children and the principal is Mr. S. Dookran. Tuition is given up to the 4th standard. The building has now been extended by the erection of four additional classrooms.

Activities. Members of the society celebrate festivals in a collective way and hold weekly sittings. Preachers have been invited to the locality to enlighten them on the teachings of their religion. Under the care of the Sabha there is a students' group which is keenly interested in the development of the body through physical culture. There is also a night school for the benefit of the young men. Mr. R. Bunwari, the tutor, gives his services gratis. The Sabha has assets worth £3,110.

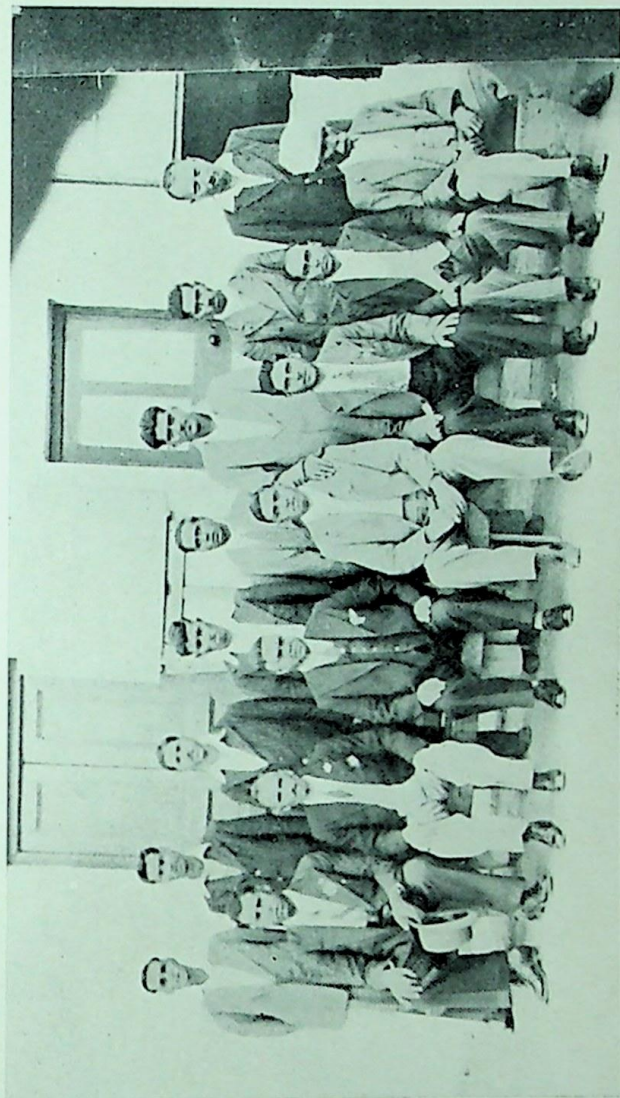
Officials and Supporters. The present officials are Babu Ramballi Singh (chairman), Mr. B. Poodhun (secretary) and Mr. Ramdhani Mahabeer (treasurer). In the various activities the Sabha has received full support from Mr. E. Gooldeep, Pt. R. B. Maharaj, Mr. G. Jagwanth, Mr. Harry Muthal, Mr. D. K. Singh, Mr. B. Sewpaul, Mr. R. Mahadeo, Mr. Bihari Maharaj, Mr. Haripersadh, Mr. Premchand, Mr. G. Sookaloo and Mr. Ramnath Vidyapathy.

ARYA SAMAJ, MOUNT PARTRIDGE

Inception. The Arya Samaj in Mount Partridge was established on 4th December, 1934, by Mr. F. Ramlagan of Westville. In a small shack a Hindi schoool was opened on 2nd June, 1935, by Pt. R. B. Maharaj. With the help of the local residents a suitable school building was erected in 1940. Tuition is given up to the 5th standard and there are at present 125 pupils on the roll. This Hindi school is affiliated to the Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal).

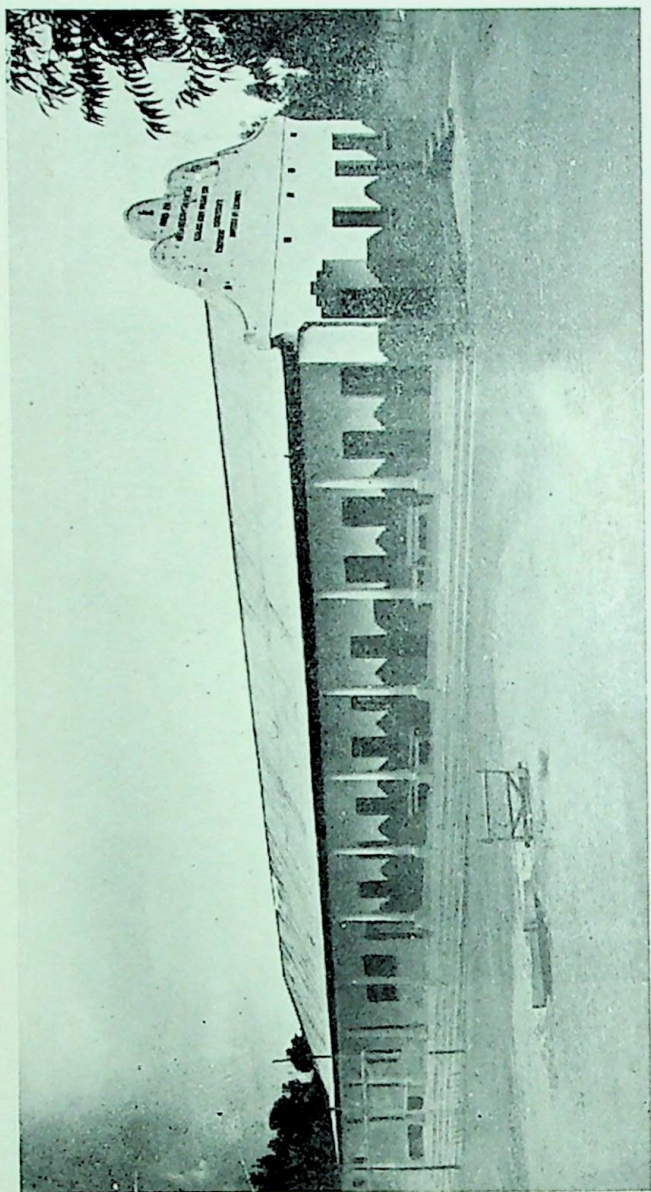
School. There were at first no facilities for English education in the district. With the assistance of Mr. Gunga Bishoon an English school was started in 1943. The land on which the school is situated was given as a donation by Mr. S. Bachharam. On the increase of children additional classrooms were put up. The school is run as Mount Partridge Government Aided Indian School.

Activities. The Samaj holds its weekly services, arranges lectures and observes all important festivals. In 1939 the Samaj prevented three or four families from being converted into Christians. The priest and Hindi teacher is Pt. O. Shivarathan, who received his sacred thread from Pt. R. B. Maharaj. Pt. R. B. Maharaj on that occasion initiated him into the order of Pandits. This event caused a great stir in the Hindu community. Prior to the Yajopavit sanskar threats were issued but with the support of Swami Bhawani Dayal and Pandit Jugmohan the ceremony was performed without any disturbance. On this occasion 24 other persons received the sacred thread. Pt. O. Shivarathan executes his task as a teacher very dutifully. He is also the Secretary of the Samaj. Mr. Sitaram Gourie is the President and Mr. S. Baijoo the Treasurer. Ungrudging assistance has been given to the Samaj by Mr. Gunga Bishoon, Pt. R. B. Maharaj, Mr. D. S. Vather, Mr. Ramgarib, Mr. I. B. Sangham, Mr. S. Dookran, Miss Siravati Baijoo, Miss Sarasvati and Miss Vineshchandra.

ARYA SAMAJ — MOUNT PARTRIDGE

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

ARYA NAV YUVAK SABHA — RAISETHORPE

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

ARYA NAV YUVAK SABHA — RAISETHORPE

SCHOOL BUILDING

ARYA NAU YUVUK SABHA, RAISETHORPE

Inception. There is a small settlement of Indians at Raisethorpe—a village about three miles away from Pietermaritzburg. Most of the inhabitants are either labourers or gardeners. For the purpose of spreading the Vedic religion the "Raisethorpe Vedic Sabha" was established in 1935. In 1944 the name was changed to "Arya Nau Yuvuk Sabha."

School. There was at the beginning no school in the district where the children could receive English and Hindi education. The Local Syndicate Company granted a piece of land to the Sabha in 1935. Later the local Recreation Club also gave a piece of land. The President of the Sabha, Mr. Baijoo, came forward and agreed to put up the school building at his own cost. Fifty per cent. of the cost of the building was, however, received from the Provincial Administration. The classroom equipment was provided by Mr. A. E. Maney. In 1945 the school building was opened. The backbone of the Sabha is Mr. T. Baijoo. It is through his far-sightedness and generosity that the progress of the Sabha has reached this stage. When the number of pupils increased Mr. Baijoo added a few more classrooms at his own expense. A further wing of the school was erected at the expense of Mr. Maharaj. The school is run officially as the Baijoo-Maharaj Government Aided Indian School. At first it was known only as the Baijoo G.A. Indian School.

In the afternoons Hindi is imparted to 150 children by Mr. K. R. Singh and Miss Savitri Nunkoo. Tamil classes are also held and the teacher is Mr. R. A. Chetty.

Important events and festivals are celebrated. The Sabha has a Bhajan Mandal under its jurisdiction.

Officials and Supporters. The President is Mr. H. Ramdhari, the secretary Mr. Sookraj Brijlall, and the treasurer Mr. S. Ramdeen. Active supporters of the Sabha are Mr. E. Gooldeep, Mr. S. Bahadur, Mr. Padyachi, Mr. B. Shivanarain, Mr. S. Parthap, and others. The present assets of the Sabha are valued at £5,000.

VEDIC YUVUK SABHA, WILGEFONTEIN

Inception. Wilgefontein is a new settlement of Indians It is some distance away from Pietermaritzburg. The inhabitants are artisans, farmers, and labourers. On 10th October, 1943, Mr. D. Sewbrath with the support and cooperation of the local residents founded the Vedic Yuvuk Sabha. His staunch co-workers are Mr. A. S. Pooran and Mr. K. Soogreem.

Activities. The Sabha runs a Hindi school under its management. The school was first conducted at the residence of Mr. Gajadhar and later at the home of Mr. R. Shivanunden.

The Sabha has purchased a property on which it has erected a building. The officials and members are very industrious and enthusiastic. They have managed to collect £600 from various parts of Natal and Transvaal. Plays and concerts are staged to raise funds. The whole project when completed will cost £2,000. The members are making a great sacrifice. A portion of their wages goes towards the building fund. The Sabha observes and celebrates all religious and national festivals.

Officials and Supporters. The Patron of the Sabha is Mr. D. Sewbrath, the founder. The President is Mr. Lakshman Bhika, the secretary Mr. R. Deeplal and the treasurer Mr. S. S. Pooran. Much support is received from Mr. E. Gooldeep, Mr. R. Marie, Mr. R. Rathansingh, Mr. R. Sewnunan and Mr. B. Bhika.

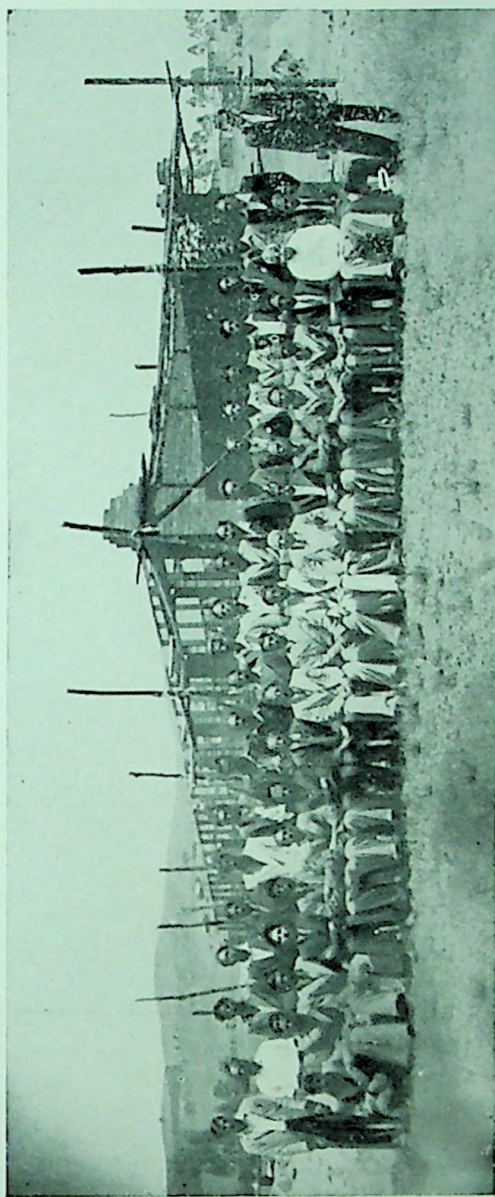
ARYA SAMAJ, LADYSMITH

Inception. Ladysmith is the largest town in Northern Natal. Indians in quite a large number are settled there. In this town a society named "Nagri Pracharni Sabha" was founded in 1916. The officials of the Sabha then were Babu Rughoonathsingh (President) and Mr. B. Bhola (secretary). Under the auspices of this Sabha the first South African Hindi Literary Conference was held in 1916. Pt. Bhawani Dayal did everything possible to make the conference a huge success. In 1919 this Pracharni Sabha was changed to Arya Samaj on the advice of Pt. Bhawani Dayal and others interested.

Activities. Much progress was made during the early days. A property was purchased to erect a hall. The Arya Samaj manages and controls a plot of land given by the Town Council to be used as a place of cremation.

Through the efforts of Mr. Vithal Lalla, one of the staunch members of the Samaj, a Gujerati-Hindi School was opened in 1921. In 1925 the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha organised the Second Vedic Conference in Ladysmith. The Samaj left no stone unturned to make this Conference a huge success. Pt. Bhawani Dayal was the President elected to preside over the Conference. The services rendered by Babu Rughoonathsingh on this occasion are worthy of emulation. He was a tower of strength.

The activities of the Samaj have taken the form of weekly services, celebration of festivals, healthy discussions

VEDIC YUVUK SABHA — WILGEFONTEIN

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

ARYA SAMAJ — LADYSMITH

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS

on religious themes, etc. Practically every preacher who has come from India has visited Ladysmith and delivered lectures for the benefit of the residents there.

Pandit Bhawani Dayal, Pt. Jugmohan and Mr. B. Bachoo have visited Ladysmith on several occasions and delivered speeches on Vedic religion and Aryan culture under the auspices of the Samaj.

Officials and Supporters. The present officials of the Samaj are Mr. L. Sewgoolam (President), Mr. R. Kallie (secretary) and Mr. D. Vithal (treasurer). Others who have served the Samaj are Mr. Moonie Mungal, Mr. Lalla Parshotam, Mr. Mugan Jivan, Mr. Sookraj Chotai and Mr. B. Vithal.

ARYA SAMAJ, DANNHAUSER

Inception. Dannhauser is a small town in Northern Natal. Most of the Indian settlers there belong to the old school of thought. The result of Dr. Bhagatram's lectures in Dannhauser was the establishment of an Arya Samaj in 1929.

At first the creation of the Samaj was strongly opposed by the orthodox priests but as time passed the hostile attitude changed. Ever since the inception of the Arya Samaj, Pt. Ramsunder Patak, the "live wire" in all public activities of Dannhauser, is the President. He is, no doubt, the leader of the Arya Samaj movement in Northern Natal. It is through his efforts that the Samaj is still an active organisation.

Activities. The Samaj conducts a Hindi school. Weekly sittings are also held. One of the effects of the propagation of Vedic teachings is that practically all the Hindu weddings in Dannhauser are performed according to Vedic rites. Under the auspices of the Samaj lectures have been given by visiting preachers from India and Pandit Jugmohan of Pietermaritzburg.

The Samaj is contemplating to erect a Vedic Temple and a Hindi School. The Secretary of the Samaj, Mr. Balrajh Goordeen, is making efforts to materialise the scheme.

CHAPTER XIII

Biographical Sketches of Arya Samaj Workers

MR. R. BODASING:

Sugar-cane farming is one of the most important occupations of the people of Natal. The majority of the sugarcane farmers are Europeans. There are, however, a sprinkling of Indians engaged in this agriculture, the Bodasing family being the most prominent. Mr. Rajdeo Bodasing took birth in this family on 5th January, 1895. He received his education in English at the Durban High Grade School.

Mr. Rajdeo Bodasing assisted his father in the industry, and through great perseverance and business acumen he was able to make much headway.

Mr. R. Bodasing's elder brother, Mr. Basdeo Bodasing, had devoted a great deal of his time towards the welfare of the Arya Samaj movement. Mr. R. Bodasing was greatly inspired by his brother's work and he showed his keenness in the advancement of this movement. He was elected President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in 1940 and has served the Sabha ever since. Under his presidentship the Sabha held a Vedic Conference in 1942. He also presided at the Hindi Samalan (conference) and at the first Aryan Youth Conference. When the debt on the Sabha's property was redeemed a "Thanksgiving Ceremony," presided over by Mr. Bodasing, was performed. The present hall of the Sabha was opened by Mr. R. Bodasing on 4th February, 1943.

Mr. R. Bodasing hoisted for the first time the "Aum" Flag on the Sabha's building on the 22nd of February, 1944. On this very auspicious occasion he made a public declaration promising to donate the sum of £10,000 (approximately 132000 Rupees). In making this move Mr. Bodasing took the first step forward to satisfy a long cherished desire of his people.

The 19th of February, 1950, will be another very auspicious occasion in the history of the Arya Samaj, when Mr. R. Bodasing will lay the foundation stone of the proposed Vedic Temple. It is hoped that during the presidentship of Mr. R. Bodasing the Pratinidhi Sabha will make a great deal of progress.

MR. D. G. SATYADEVA:

Mr. D. G. Satyadeva is the chief pillar on which the Arya Samaj movement in Natal exists. He has dedicated his life towards the progress of the Arya Samaj. He is a very sincere worker, full of devotion and enthusiasm. He is a very staunch follower of Rishi Dayanand and he has discharged his public responsibilities energetically and faithfully. He has made contributions in all spheres for the progress of the Arya Samaj.

Mr. Satyadeva was born on 7th July, 1889, in Verulam and he obtained his education at a Mission school. Having lost his father at an early age, he was forced to leave school at the age of 9 when he was in Standard I. Subsequently he found employment at the Durban Corporation, where he has worked for the last 51 years.

During his youthhood Mr. Satyadeva was greatly influenced by Swami Shankeranandji, who inculcated in him a spirit of service for the Arya Samaj. Mr. Satyadeva has not yet forgotten the Swamiji's teachings and has worked incessantly and very humbly for the advancement of the Arya Samaj as outlined by the Swamiji.

Mr. Satyadeva was keenly desirous of disseminating Hindi and propagating the Vedic Dharma and he, therefore, started evening classes at his home. To encourage pupils to attend his classes he purchased books, slates, etc., from his paltry earnings. He was successful in training a band of young men and getting them interested in Aryan culture. On 17th April, 1912, he founded the Arya Yuvuk Sabha. He was elected President of the Sabha. Under his guidance the Arya Yuvuk Sabha has been able to make very vast strides. One night when Mr. Satyadeva visited a public latrine in the City he found a beggar lying there as he had no place of shelter of his own. Mr. Satyadeva was greatly moved by the beggar's plight. He narrated the incident to his Sabha and, consequently, the Aryan Benevolent Home was established. Mr. Satyadeva has served as the President of the Sabha for 29 years.

In the year 1925 a proposal for Rishi Dayanand's Centenary Celebrations was moved by Mr. Satyadeva. It was at these celebrations that the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha took its birth. He was elected the Secretary of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and has served in this capacity ever since. The Pratinidhi Sabha, largely through the efforts of Mr. Satyadeva, has done a great amount of work in making the Hindus conscious of their religion and culture. He has been the real "live wire" of the Sabha in organising conferences and doing everything possible for their success. It was on his strength that the Pratinidhi Sabha was able to hold so

many conferences and public meetings. In recognition of his meritorious services he has been elected one of the honorary trustees. Mr. Satyadeva has dedicated his life to the service of the Aryan Benevolent Home and the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. He has served these institutions from their inception. He is a very ardent worker, resolute in thought and very religious in his outlook. These qualities have made him a true and humble worker.

MR. SOOKRAJ CHOTAI, B.A.:

Very few of the young men, highly educated in English, have come forward to serve their community. The name of Mr. Sookraj Chotai is among the foremost of such young men.

Mr. Sookraj Chotai took birth in a very poor parentage in Clare Estate on 15th January, 1912. He received his education in English up to Standard VII at the Carlisle Street Government Indian School, Durban. Owing to financial difficulties he was compelled to look for employment. He started teaching in the year 1927. His keen ambition to acquire higher education was not dampened by his poor economic position; he studied on his own during his afterwork hours. He wrote many examinations with great success. In 1947 he passed the B.A. Degree examination. From a young age Mr. Chotai showed love for the tenets of the Vedic religion. He has read many books in English and in Hindi and thereby has become thoroughly conversant with the fundamentals of the Vedic religion.

Mr. Chotai first started teaching at Clairwood and has served in this profession for the past 23 years. At present he is the principal of the Essendene Road Government Aided Indian School. Whilst serving his community in the educational field he has also taken interest in other public activities. When he was in Ladysmith he served as the secretary of the local Arya Samaj from 1932 to 1937. During his stay in Ladysmith he did a great deal of good work in Northern Natal. The show staged by Yogi Yashpal in Ladysmith was organised by Mr. Chotai. In the year 1935 he founded the Young Hindu Cultural Service Society, of which he was the first president. He held this post for three years up to the time of his transfer from Ladysmith. Wherever Mr. Chotai taught he tried to infuse in his associates the ideals of Vedic Dharma.

Mr. Chotai has served as honorary Assistant Secretary of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha for seven years. At present he holds the same post in the Sabha and he is discharging his duties very ably. He is always ready to do his very best to make all undertakings of the Sabha successful. Mr.

Chotai is the secretary of the Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal) the cause of which he is trying to advance creditably.

Mr. Chotai is a good writer in English. The English translation of this book, "Religious Awakening in South Africa," bears testimony to his ability. The English version of all matters pertaining to the conferences organised by the Sabha has been to a very large extent done by Mr. Chotai. He has shown much proficiency in translating religious and literary works from Hindi into English.

Mr. Sookraj Chotai is a real asset to his community.

MR. M. MOONOO:

Mr. M. Moonoo was born on 19th September, 1883. He was educated at the N.G.R. Indian School. In the year 1912 he came in contact with Swami Shankeranandji. Through the influence of Swamiji he became interested in the works of the Arya Samaj. When Dr. Bhagatram came tó preach in 1919 he resided at Mr. Moonoo's home.

Mr. Moonoo was the Treasurer of the Durban Arya Samaj for many years. He has always been a very ardent worker of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Since 1930 he is the Treasurer of this Sabha and he has discharged his duties very ably. He has been the Honorary Auditor of Arya Yuvuk Sabha for a long time. He is the Manager of the Durban Hindi Patshala and the management of the Patshala is left entirely in his able hands.

The members of Mr. Moonoo's family have been keenly interested in education. His daughter Narayani is well educated in Hindi. She was the Secretary of the Stree Samaj. She is married to Pandit R. B. Maharaj, who is a very prominent personality of Pietermaritzburg and she is still an active worker. She has been the President of Maritzburg Hindu Stree Samaj. Shrimati Indradevi Debi Singh, Mr. Moonoo's daughter-in-law, is also doing her share to improve the lot of Hindu women in Durban. She is the President of the Overport Hindu Stree Samaj. She conducts Hindi classes at her home free of charge. Her Hindi Patshala is affiliated to the Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal). Other members of Mr. Moonoo's family have also worked for the advancement of the Arya Samaj movement.

MR. S. L. SINGH:

Mr. S. L. Singh is one of the principal workers of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. In all his deliberations he is very enthusiastic and fearless. He possesses a very striking and dynamic personality.

Mr. S. L. Singh was born in Durban on 11th January, 1896. He was educated in English in Durban and received

his Hindi education from Pandit Ambaram. He made headway by self-study. Mr. S. L. Singh commenced his public activities in 1916. He was elected as the Secretary of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha in 1918. When the Aryan Benevolent Home was established in 1921 Mr. S. L. Singh was made the Secretary-Treasurer, which post he still holds. He has been the President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha for many years and is the Auditor of the Sabha for the past ten years. On many occasions he has served as Chairman of Reception Committees of conferences and congregations held by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha.

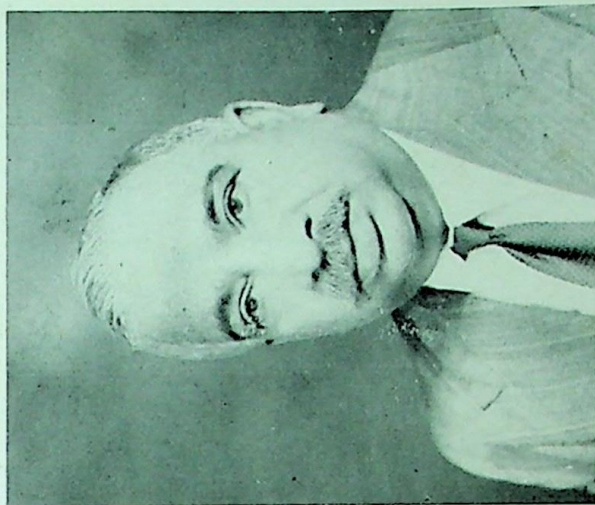
Mr. S. L. Singh also takes part in the activities of various other societies. He has been Chairman of the Council of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha. He is a Vice-President of the Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal) and Inspector of Durban Hindi Patshala.

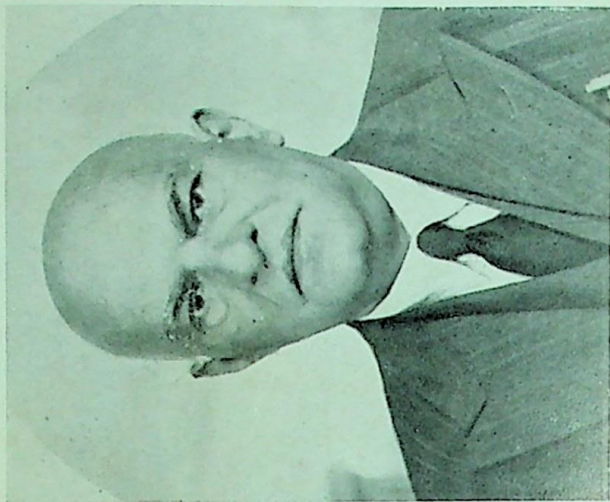
Mr. S. L. Singh is a very powerful speaker both in Hindi and English. He has incessantly worked for the progress and uplift of the Indian community. Mr. Singh has been a great pillar of strength to the Arya Samaj movement in South Africa.

PANDIT R. B. MAHARAJ:

Pandit R. B. Maharaj is one of the prominent workers of the Arya Samaj in Pietermaritzburg, which is the capital of Natal.

Panditji has made a very wide and deep study of Vedic religion and is a distinguished Hindi scholar. He was born on 5th of November, 1894. While studying English he was keenly interested in advancing his Hindi education, which he acquired from Pandit Shivanarain Panday. Panditji started his professional career as a book-keeper. When he had gained sufficient experience he took up land and estate and insurance agencies. He has been a very successful businessman.

Pandit R. B. Maharaj was greatly influenced by Swami Manglanand Puri's lectures, which influenced him to take part in public activities. The field of Panditji's work for his community is very large. He has served a number of societies in many official capacities. Panditji has been the main cog in the wheel of public work in Pietermaritzburg. He was the Secretary of the Reception Committee of the Hindi Literary Conference held in 1917. He has also served as Secretary of the Hindi Rastriya Patshala and the Vishnu Temple. Panditji was responsible to a very great extent for the establishment of an Arya Samaj in Pietermaritzburg and was its President for twelve years. Panditji was also President of the Hindu United Service League, which organi-

MR. S. L. SINGH
President (1926-29), Trustee
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Natal

MR. M. MOONOO
Trustee and Treasurer
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Natal

MR. B. M. PATEL
President (1939), Trustee
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Natal

PT. R. B. MAHARAJ
President (1930), Trustee
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Natal

sation was formed as a result of his efforts. In 1936 Panditji presided over the Third Vedic Conference held in Pietermaritzburg. He was elected President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in 1930.

Panditji is an official Priest and Preacher of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. He regularly visited the Pietermaritzburg Gaol for ten years and imparted religious teachings to prisoners. During this period he also gave comfort to the patients of Grey's Hospital and Mental Hospital by preaching to them. At present he is a Trustee of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. He was the Commissioner of Examinations held at the Pietermaritzburg Centre of the Rastra Bhasha Prachar Samiti, Wardha, India.

Pandit R. B. Maharaj has served the following societies in many ways:—Vedic Vidya Prachar Sabha, Pentrich; Saraswathie Sangeeth Mundal, Mount Partridge; Arya Samaj; Veda Dharma Sabha; Arya Nau Yuvuk Sabha and other institutions.

Panditji's life for the advancement of the Arya Samaj movement is an exemplary one.

Mrs. R. B. Maharaj is also a prominent public worker. She has been the President of the Pietermaritzburg Hindu Stree Samaj for many years.

MR. B. M. PATEL:

Mr. Bhailal Mathurbhai Patel was born in the district of Dharmaj, near Baroda, on the 5th of May, 1887, and was educated at the Petlad High School.

Mr. Patel came to the Union of South Africa in the year 1903 on a business mission. He started trade first in Pietermaritzburg and then came to Durban. With business skill and perseverance Mr. Patel was able to make progress and today he is one of the wealthy people of Durban.

From an early age Mr. Patel was interested in religion. He became a very enthusiastic worker in local religious and social activities from the time of the advent of Bhai Parmanand in this country. He was the Secretary of the Committee which accorded welcome to the Panditji in Pietermaritzburg. He was the Secretary of M. K. Gandhi Library and Parsee Rustomjee Hall for many years. During his term of office as Secretary of the Library he endeavoured to increase the number of religious books, e.g. the Vedas and the Upanishadas. Mr. B. M. Patel was instrumental in bringing Pandit Harishanker Vidyarthi into this country in 1934 to preach. He also made negotiations to bring Acharya Shree Ramdeo, but the Acharyaji was not able to come.

Mr. Patel is of the opinion that the Arya Samaj has protected and saved the Hindu community from the attacks of non-Hindu religionists and, therefore, he is a great supporter of the Arya Samaj movement. He has served as the President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and is its Trustee at present. When the Sabha was experiencing financial difficulties Mr. Patel came to its rescue. He is a patron of Arya Yuvuk Sabha and has taken a very keen interest in its activities ever since the establishment of the Aryan Benevolent Home. Mr. Patel's name will always remain in the history of the Aryan Benevolent Home. Recently, besides donating the sum of £105, he has worked very hard along with other officials towards the redemption of a bond of £6,000 which was incurred in the purchasing of 17½ acres of land for the expansion of the activities of the Home.

Mr. B. M. Patel has held responsible positions in many other societies. He has been the president of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha, Bombay Presidency Hindu Association, Hindu Crematorium Fund and other institutions.

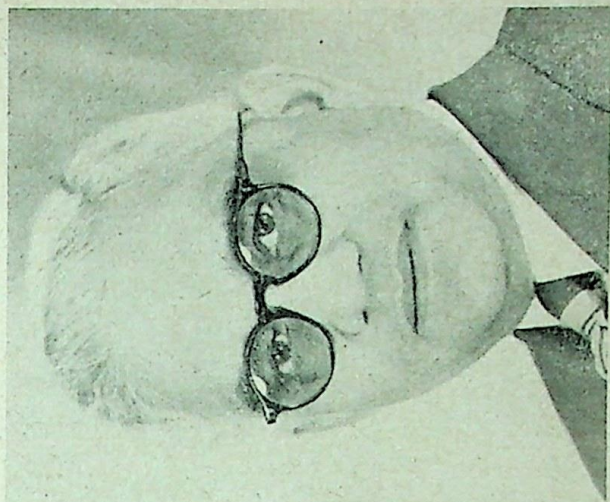
Mrs. Patel, too, is a prominent worker among Indian women, and she is the President of the Gujerati Hindu Mahila Mundal. Mr. Jayantilal, who is Mr. Patel's eldest son, has completed the requirements of an attorney. It is hoped that he will emulate his father's good qualities and work for the uplift and progress of the Arya Samaj and the Hindu community.

MR. B. A. MAGHRAJH:

Mr. B. A. Maghrajh was born in Mauritius on 19th of July, 1873. His family came to the Union of South Africa when he was six years old. He received his education locally.

He acted as Joint Secretary of the Committee that accorded a welcome reception to Professor Bhai Parmanandji. Later he worked in the interest of many organisations. He was Vice-President of the Hindu Sudhar Sabha. He was Treasurer of Dayanand Centenary Celebration Committee. He had the honour to be the President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha for one year and at present he is a Trustee of the Sabha.

MR. F. SATYAPAL:

Mr. F. Satyapal is a resident of Pietermaritzburg. In this town there are a few prominent Indians and Mr. F. Satyapal is one of them. On reaching his home if you find a diminutive man with a very happy countenance, old in appearance but very young in spirits, waiting at the gateway to receive you; first by greeting you with both his hands raised according to the Indian custom; and then by leading

← **MR. B. A. MAGHRAJH**

President (1932 and 1937) and Trustee, Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Natal

MR. F. SATYAPAL →

ex-President

Veda Dharma Sabha, P.M. Burg

PANDIT R. BUNWARI

Jt. Secretary, Veda Dharma Sabha,
P.M. Burg

PANDIT JUGMOHAN VIDYARATAN

Vice-President, Veda Dharma
Sabha, P.M. Burg

you into his house very hospitably, then you could be assured that that person is no other than Mr. Satyapal.

Mr. Satyapal was born in Durban and educated at the Cato Manor Mission School. After hearing Shree Swami Mangalanand Puri's lectures young Satyapal became inclined towards the principles of the Arya Samaj. He then studied the Vedic religion and joined many societies. He is one of the foundation members of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha. By persistent self-study Mr. Satyapal was able to equip himself with a sound knowledge of Hindi which enabled him to compose songs and write dramatic plays in the vernacular. Many societies were able to raise funds by staging plays written by him. His songs, based on religious, political and social themes, were at one time very popular.

Mr. Satyapal settled in Pietermaritzburg in 1923 and has been there since that time. He has taken a very active part in public activities. He has worked with practically all institutions in Pietermaritzburg, including political organisations. Many societies owe their success to the co-operation and assistance given by Mr. Satyapal.

In 1925 Mr. Satyapal was the Secretary of the Rishi Dayanand Centenary Celebration Committee. He has been President and Trustee of the Vidya Pracharni Sabha of Pietermaritzburg, which was established in 1923. In the year 1924 he established the Nagri Hithaishi Sabha which is now known as Arya Samaj, Plessislaer. He is Vice-President, Trustee and Patron of this Sabha at present. He is the Vice-President of the Aryan Benevolent Society of Pietermaritzburg. Mr. Satyapal has been a foundation member of the local Arya Samaj and has served the Sabha as the Treasurer and as a Trustee. He was also President of the Veda Dharma Sabha and is now its Vice-President. He was the Secretary of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Natal) for one year. Mr. Satyapal has served Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal), Yuvuk Arya Samaj, Deepawali Cheer Committee, Arya Bhajan Mundal Durban, Mohini Orchestra and other bodies in various capacities.

Mrs. Satyapal is also engaged in many social activities. She takes an active interest in the management of the local Aryan Benevolent Home. During the times of the Indo-African riots and heavy floods Mrs. Satyapal helped the distressed people. Mrs. Satyapal is of a cheerful disposition and is full of courtesy and kindness.

Many visitors and particularly preachers from Bharat have been the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Satyapal when in Pietermaritzburg. Mr. Satyapal's brother, the late Mr. F. Ramlagan, also served well in the interests of the Arya Samaj.

MR. E. GOOLDEEP:

Mr. E. Gooldeep is a resident of Pietermaritzburg. He has earned a good name there in business, and has also shown a great interest in serving the general public. Mr. Gooldeep has been the President of the well-known Veda Dharma Sabha of Pietermaritzburg for a number of years and during the course of his presidentship the Sabha made good progress. Chiefly through the efforts of Mr. Gooldeep, the Sabha was able to purchase a piece of land on which it has erected its large hall. In addition to his own institution, Mr. Gooldeep is connected with many other Aryan institutions. He is also President, Trustee and member of several societies and manager of a number of schools.

MR. B. PURMASIR:

Mr. B. Purmasir is a prominent Indian businessman in Durban and is in the forefront of social and religious activities.

Mr. B. Purmasir was born in Durban in the year 1878 and after receiving his education in English he entered business. At first he worked in a mineral factory in Greyville. In 1929 he successfully established the Durban Electric Mineral Waterworks and subsequently he founded the S.A. Sweet Manufacturing Company. Both these businesses have made excellent progress and as a result he became wealthy. His accumulated wealth found way in other investments.

In 1933 he visited India, where he contacted a number of Arya Samajes. Soon after his return from India he began to take an interest in the works of the Arya Samaj movement in this country. He is the Trustee and official of a number of societies as well as an active member of the Gandhi-Tagore Lectureship Trust.

Mr. B. Purmasir is keenly interested in Vedic literature and culture and devotes much of his time to the activities of the Arya Samaj. On many occasions he has contributed liberally to a number of societies when they were in financial difficulties. He is one of the Trustees of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha as well as a Life Patron of the Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal). Between the years 1948-1949, when the financial position of the Westville Arya Samaj became very critical, it was Mr. B. Purmasir who very kindly came to their rescue. God has blessed him with abundant wealth and the Samaj looks forward to his continued financial help. His eldest son, Mr. Sukhdevanand, who also has interest in various public activities is at present the Treasurer of the Hindi Shiksha Sangh (Natal).

PANDIT R. BUNWARI:

Pandit R. Bunwari was born in Pietermaritzburg on 10th January, 1904. He received his English education at the High Grade Government Indian School and studied Hindi at the Hindi Rashtriya Patshala largely through the assistance of his brother, Pt. R. B. Maharaj. In due course he became a teacher in English and still remains in this profession. He has also been a Hindi teacher for a number of years. In 1933 he was an assistant teacher at the Glencoe Indian School and on transfer he was appointed as the Principal of the Thornville Government-Aided Indian School. He has always been an ardent public worker. He gained proficiency in the performance of both the Sanatan and the Vedic ceremonies. After consulting Swami Bhawani Dayal, he learnt it was fit and proper to perform the various ceremonies according to the Vedic rites only.

Pandit Bunwari showed great interest in public work. He is associated with many societies. When he was a teacher in Glencoe, he was the Secretary of the Glencoe Arya Samaj. He was the Vice-President and for a number of years the Assistant Secretary of the Pietermaritzburg Arya Samaj. He was the Chairman and the Assistant Secretary of the Vidya Pracharni Sabha. From 1940 he is the Assistant Joint Secretary of the Veda Dharma Sabha. He is the Vice-President of the Vedic Vidya Pracharak Sabha. He is also the Secretary and Priest of many other societies. He is one of the priests of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and regularly visits the Pietermaritzburg gaol to preach to the Indian prisoners.

PANDIT JUGMOHAN SINGH:

Pandit Jugmohan Singh (Vidyaratan), of Pietermaritzburg, is a strong pillar of the Arya Samaj in the Province of Natal. He is a live wire of the Pietermaritzburg Arya Samaj and a very enthusiastic worker.

Panditji was born of poor parents in February, 1913. During his childhood he lost his parents as a result of which he had to face many hardships and his education was neglected. Eventually he began to study on his own. When Pandit Ralaram came to this country, Pandit Jugmohan Singh was so much impressed with his lectures that he decided to go to India in order to become a student of the Hindu Religion. In 1935 he set sail for India. In Lahore he entered the Dayanand Brahmavidyalaya, where he was taught by Pandit Rishiram. After studying for five years he returned to South Africa in 1940 with the title of Vidyaratan. In Pietermaritzburg Pandit Jugmohan Singh became the principal of the Veda Dharma Sabha Hindi School. Here he began to propagate the Hindu Religion

amongst the people. Panditjee is also closely associated with the social, religious and educational societies in Pietermaritzburg. He is also the Vice-Chairman of the Veda Dharma Sabha and the Hindu United Service Brigade. Panditjee is also the priest and preacher of many societies. Several times he has been to Northern Natal as a preacher. Panditjee is an impressive speaker and is loved by all because of his polite and kind nature. In Pietermaritzburg, Panditjee is the principal of the local branch of the Hindi Shiksha Sangh and prepares students for higher examinations in Hindi.

PANDIT V. C. NAYANARAJH:

Pandit V. C. Nayanarajh was born in Umgeni on Thursday the 10th February, 1891. His English education terminated in 1905, after which he learnt Hindi, Tamil and Telegu, and thereby he became well acquainted with all sections of the Hindu community.

Swami Shankeranandji taught him how to perform Sandhya and Havan. Pandit Naganarajh is a foundation member and priest of Arya Yuvuk Sabha. Panditji performs Vedic Sanskars and Shuddhi ceremonies. Being well versed in three Indian languages he is able to give good exposition of the Sanskrit Mantras. On the occasion of Rishi Dayanand's Centenary Celebrations, a Maha Yag was performed by Pandit Nayanarajh. This was the first time the Hindus held a Maha Yag in this country. Panditjee is an official priest and preacher of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and since 1926 he has regularly visited the Durban Central Gaol where he has imparted religious teachings with the view to reforming the prisoners in their habits and deeds.

In the year 1912, he established a Hindi Patshala in Sea Cow Lake where he taught in the evenings. Through the help of the students of this school he established the Arya Mitra Mandal and became its first chairman. On 4th November, 1929, he established the Arya Yuvuk Mandal and was also elected its first chairman. The orthodox Hindus of Sea Cow Lake were greatly opposed to Panditji's views but the Panditji continued with his work in spite of the opposition. Panditji has been serving on the Management Committee of the Aryan Benevolent Home from the time of its establishment and has been its chairman since 1922. He is discharging his duties with great devotion. He is held in high esteem by the Tamil, Telegu and Hindi speaking people.

MR. R. KARPATH:

Mr. R. Karpath was born in Verulam in the year 1907. His father died when he was only one year old and then he was brought up by his uncle, Mr. Sumpath. Because of

MR. V. C. NAYNA RAJH

Trustee:

Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Natal

MR. R. KARPATH

President:

Candella Estate Hindu Sangatan

MR. B. PURMASIR

Trustee:

Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Natal

MR. B. GOVINDH

President:

Arya Yuvuk Sabha, Durban

these unfortunate circumstances he did not receive good education.

In the year 1922 he came from Verulam and settled down in the district of Candella Estate where he accepted a job as a pedlar at £2 per month. Through sheer dint of perseverance and hard work he eventually became a successful businessman.

When Mr. Karpath improved his position he began to take interest in public work. In 1929 he became the Treasurer of the local Hindu Young Men's Society. He was the Treasurer of the Candella Estate Hindu Sangatan in 1931. In 1936 he became the President of this society and today he is the live wire of this body. When this society was about to cease functioning owing to debts, Mr. Karpath, with the assistance of Messrs. B. M. Chaithu and P. Chirkoot, saved it from becoming defunct. Mr. Karpath, through the Hindu Sangatan, assisted in the establishment of the Candella Estate Girls' School, of which he is now a Trustee. At his home he runs a Hindi School where about 50 children attend. He is the President of the Mitra Bhajan Mundal and the Candella Estate Cemetery. He is a Vice-President of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and Chairman of its Working Committee.

MR. B. GOVINDH:

Mr. B. Govindh was born in Clare Estate in 1892. During his early life he had many difficulties owing to the poor position of his family; consequently his education was retarded. He began to assist his eldest brother, the late Mr. B. Bachoo, in the building industry and gradually became proficient in the trade. Today he is a reputed builder.

Like his brother, Mr. Govindh began to take part in public work and became a member of several religious, social, and educational societies. He is a foundation member of the Rooikopjes Vidya Pracharni Sabha. Since two years he is the President of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha. Keen interest was shown by him in the affairs of the Westville Arya Samaj, of which he is the President. It was largely through his efforts that the Westville Mahela Arya Samaj was established. He is also associated with other societies and devotes much of his time to the activities of these bodies.

MR. R. DEODUTT:

Mr. R. Deodutt was born in Cato Manor on 12th August, 1899. There being no educational facilities, Mr. Deodutt managed to study a little here and there. In due course he studied Hindi under Pandit Poodan Maharaj, after which he continued his studies on his own. Mr. Deodutt was

a staunch orthodox Hindu, but when Pandit Ishwardutt Vidyalankar came to this country to preach under the auspices of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha his views changed and he became an Arya Samajist.

With the help of his friend, Mr. H. S. Padarath, he established the Shree Satya Veda Dharma Jigyasi Sabha in 1921, now known as Cato Manor Arya Samaj. For a number of years he has been the President of this Society and during his Presidentship the Samaj has made much progress. His son, as well as his whole family, is a strong supporter and follower of the Vedic Dharma. At present Mr. Deodutt is one of the Vice-Presidents of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha.

MR. VITHAL LALLA:

Mr. Vithal Lalla was born in India, in the district of Karod in Surat, in the year 1888. He came to the Union of S. Africa in 1895 and lived in Ladysmith, where he subsequently began to preach about the Arya Samaj with great influence. Ever since the establishment of the Ladysmith Arya Samaj he is its member and has served as its President for three years. At present he is a Trustee of the Samaj. He established the Gujerati-Hindi School in 1929 and has been responsible for its organisation and management. The success of the Second Vedic Conference, held in 1925, was to a large measure due to the assistance given by Mr. Lalla. Much good work is being done by him in various societies in Ladysmith. Mr. Lalla still continues to take a very keen interest in the propagation of the Vedic Dharma.

PANDIT B. TULSIRAM:

Pandit B. Tulsiram was born on 15th September, 1903. His family being poor, Panditjee's education was retarded. At the early age of 12 years he began to work. He received his Hindi and Sanskrit education under Pandit Ayodhya Prasad. He married the daughter of Pandit Bhagwandeen Maharaj in 1923.

Under the influence of Mr. Satyadeva, Pandit Tulsiram began to take interest in the works of the Arya Samaj. He showed a natural tendency towards religion and began to participate in weekly religious deliberations. Panditjee studied the Sanskar Vidhi and began to perform ceremonies according to Vedic rites. He was appointed by Arya Yuvuk Sabha to teach Sanskrit and the Sanskars according to the Sanskar Vidhi. His love for Hindi was so great that he always imparted Hindi education to young men.

Pandit Tulsiram has served several societies. He was the Secretary of the Cato Manor Arya Samaj for two years. He served as the Priest of the Sydenham Arya Samaj. He was responsible for the establishment of the Clare Estate

MR. R. DEODUTT
President
Arya Samaj, Cato Manor

MR. VITHAL LALLA
ex-President & Trustee
Arya Samaj, Ladysmith

PANDIT RAMSUNDAR PATAK
President
Arya Samaj, Dannhauser

PANDIT TULSIRAM
ex-President
Clare Estate Arya Samaj

Arya Samaj, under the aegis of which he ran a Hindi School and held religious services on Sundays at his house. He is also a Priest of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and is the Secretary of the Priest Committee of the Sabha.

Vedic Kathas, marriages, Shuddhis and other Vedic ceremonies are quite often performed by Panditjee.

Three books, the titles of which are "Views on Anthyeshti Sanskar", "What is the Sanatan Dharma" and "Vedic Sandhya" were written by the Panditjee and published by the Arya Samaj, Sydenham.

PANDIT RAMSUNDER PATAK:

Pandit Ramsunder Patak has been the principal propagator of the Arya Samaj in Northern Natal. For a number of years Panditjee was the President of the Dannhauser Arya Samaj. Prior to this he was President of the Hindi Pracharni Sabha. Mr. Patak was Chairman of the Reception Committee of the second Vedic Conference held in Lady smith. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha has nominated him as one of its priests and he is the Sabha's official preacher in the Ladysmith gaol.

Mr. Patak has always worked with love and devotion for the Arya Samaj movement.

MR. G. MERHOY:

Mr. G. Merhoy is one of the old workers of the Arya Samaj and has taken keen interest in this movement from the days of Professor Bhai Parmanandjee. Mr. Merhoy was Trustee of the Clare Estate Hindi Arya Ashram, which was founded by Swami Bhawani Dayal. He was also a member of the Veda Dharma Sabha of Clare Estate.

Mr. Merhoy is one of the Trustees of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and has always taken a very keen interest in its affairs. He has given advice and help in financial matters of the Sabha.

One of Mr. G. Merhoy's sons, Mr. Harishanker, received his education at Gurukul Kangri, in India, where the degree of Ayurvedalankar was conferred upon him. After a few years' stay in Durban Pt. Harishanker returned to India to further his studies.

THE LATE MR. R. K. KAPITAN:

The late Mr. R. K. Kapitan was born in the town of Navsari, in Gujerat, India, in 1892. He came to the Union of South Africa in 1904. He started business by opening a restaurant in Durban and he gradually established himself very well in this occupation. Mr. Kapitan took a great liking to Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj. He sent his eldest

son, Mr. Harischandra, to Gurukul Kangri and his two daughters to Jalundar Kanya Maha Vidyalaya (Jalundar Girls' High School) for their education.

Mr. R. K. Kapitan became very interested in the activities of the Arya Samaj in this country. He was the Chairman of Rishi Dayanand Centenary Celebration Committee. He assisted in every way possible for the formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. He served the Sabha in the capacities of President and Treasurer for many years. Mr. Kapitan was the first to give financial assistance for the purchase of the Sabha's property. By making contributions he encouraged religious and social organisations.

When the Girl Guides of Baroda Arya Kanya Maha Vidyalaya arrived in 1934 under the care of Pandit Anandpriyaji, Mr. Kapitan did everything possible for the success of their tour in this country. When Professor Yashpal was in Durban as the guest of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Mr. Kapitan relieved the Sabha of much of its responsibilities by housing the Professor and his Secretary at his home.

Mr. Kapitan went away to Johannesburg in 1936 to supervise his business there. He died suddenly on 20th of June, 1947. His death has been a big blow to the Arya Samaj movement of South Africa. Mr. Kapitan was a very enthusiastic and fearless worker.

Mr. Kapitan's son, Mr. Harischandra, is also interested in the Arya Samaj movement and he is a Trustee of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha.

THE LATE BABU RAGHUNATH SINGH:

The late Babu Raghunath Singh's name is of particular importance among the public workers of Northern Natal. Babujee was a resident of Ladysmith. On 16th of April, 1913, the Nagri Pracharni Sabha was established in Ladysmith. The name of this society was later changed to Arya Samaj, Ladysmith, of which Babu Raghunath Singh was president for many years.

Mr. Raghunath Singh was the President of the First Vedic Conference held during the time of Rishi Dayanand Centenary Celebrations. He met the entire expenses incurred in the Maha Yag which was performed at these celebrations. The Second Vedic Conference, held in Ladysmith, was a huge success through the efforts of Mr. Singh.

In the year 1916 the First Hindi Literary Conference (Samalan) was held in Ladysmith through the endeavours of Pandit Bhawani Dayal. Babu Raghunath Singh was made the Chairman of the Reception Committee.

Babujee preached in the Ladysmith gaol as the official preacher of the Pratinidhi Sabha. He died of heart failure.

THE LATE
MR. R. K. KAPITAN
President (1930-32,1934-36)
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Natal

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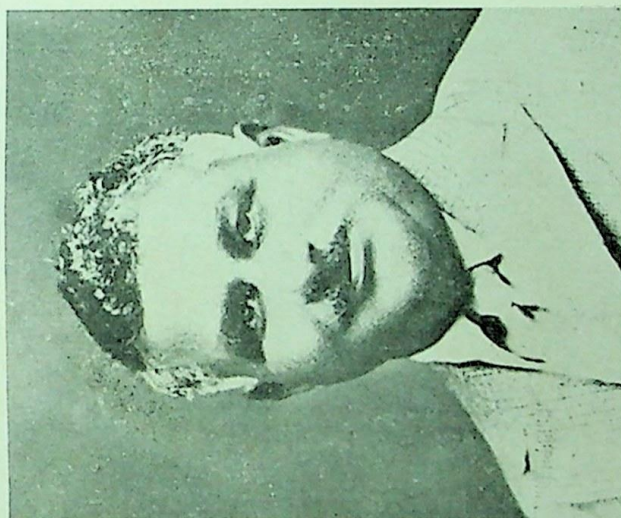
MR. H. KAPITAN
Trustee:
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Natal

THE LATE MR. B. BODASING

President (1938)—Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Natal

THE LATE MR. R. RAMKLASS

Ex-President — Arya Yuvuk Sabha, Durban

Babujee's efforts for the advancement of the Arya Samaj are commendable.

THE LATE MR. BASDEO BODASING:

The late Mr. Basdeo Bodasing was born in 1893. He was the third son of Mr. Bodasing. After receiving education at the Durban Higher Grade School he assisted his father in farming.

When Mr. Bodasing came to Durban in 1937 he got interested in the Arya Samaj movement. He was elected President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in 1938. He presided at the Vedic Conference at which the South African Hindu Maha Sabha was resuscitated. He worked hard to redeem the debt on the Sabha's property. When Mr. Bodasing went back to Stanger to attend to his business he continued to give his interest and co-operation in the affairs of the Sabha.

Mr. Bodasing died of heart failure in 1939. The death of Mr. Bodasing was a big blow to the entire Aryan community, but he had kindled the fire of service to the community among the members of his family and after his demise his younger brother, Mr. R. Bodasing, became the President of the Sabha. He is still serving the Sabha in this capacity.

THE LATE MR. R. RAMKLASS:

The late Mr. R. Ramklass was born and educated in Pietermaritzburg. He came to Durban and started business on a small scale. He studied on his own to improve his education in Hindi and English. His marriage ceremony was performed by Pandit Ishwardutt Vidyalankar. He was greatly inspired by the Panditjee's lectures and became interested in public work.

Mr. Ramklass started his public career by becoming a member of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha. He was the Secretary of the Sabha for many years. He was later elected its President, which post he held for four years.

He was a very enthusiastic worker and greatly devoted to the Vedic Dharma. He died of heart failure. He has left behind indelible memories of his good work.

THE LATE MR. B. SOOKDEO SINGH:

The late Mr. B. Sookdeo Singh was a resident of Durban. He was a very keen businessman. At first he traded in company with his brothers, but later he became a partner of Mr. B. M. Singh. When Mr. B. M. Singh died, Mr. B. S. Singh became the sole proprietor of the undertaking. Being a person of great initiative and fine personality he was very successful in business.

Mr. B. S. Singh became interested in public work and participated in the activities of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and became one of its Trustees. Mr. Singh was also a very enthusiastic member of the Aryan Benevolent Home Management Committee. He donated very liberally to many institutions. He has bequeathed a piece of land to the Arya Samaj, Cato Manor, for the erection of a hall, and has made a provision in his will for the Samaj to benefit to the sum of £2,000 from his estate subject to the discretion of the Executors.

The Arya Samaj movement on the whole has sustained a very heavy loss in the death of Mr. B. S. Singh.

THE LATE MR. B. BACHOO:

The late Mr. B. Bachoo was born in a very poor parentage on 19th January, 1892. Owing to the very poor financial state of his parents he was not able to receive education and was forced to start work at a very young age. Mr. Bachoo's parents were followers of the Shivnarain Panth. He was always desirous of acquiring education and he studied Hindi and English on his own by getting guidance from all possible sources.

Mr. Bachoo was able to learn the art of the building trade and gradually he became a building contractor of repute and standing.

When Mr. Bachoo went to Rooikopjes he joined the Vidya Pracharni Sabha. As a member of this society he was privileged to read the Satyarth Prakash (Light of Truth) and other Vedic literature. This study enabled him to get a good understanding of the Vedic Tenets and he became a staunch Arya Samajist. He composed poems in Hindi. Mr. Bachoo's love for literature was so great that he created the B. Bachoo's Vedic Literature Dissemination Fund to circulate Vedic literature. This was the first move of its kind in the history of the Arya Samaj in this country. A large number of booklets were distributed by this Fund.

Mr. Bachoo was the President and Trustee of the Arya Samaj, Cato Manor. He was Trustee and Priest of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and a member of the Gandhi-Tagore Lectureship Trust. Mr. Bachoo donated liberally to many deserving causes. The Arya Samaj lost a very enthusiastic worker in the death of Mr. B. Bachoo on 14th September, 1947.

THE LATE MR. HANS MAGHRAJH:

The late Mr. Hans Maghrajh was born in Durban on 31st March, 1909. He received his education locally and started business as a broker. He was a very successful businessman and became wealthy at quite an early age.